

INTERROGATING THE *VANUA* AND THE INSTITUTIONAL TRUSTEESHIP ROLE
OF THE *ITAUKEI* LAND TRUST BOARD (TLTB): UNDERSTANDING THE
ECONOMIC MARGINALIZATION OF *ITAUKEI*

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By
Ponipate Rokolekutu

Dedicated to:

my late paternal grandparents: Ilaisa and Elina Kalouca

late Nei: Lice Tinai Matatolu

&

late mother: Miriama Soronaqaqa Rokolekutu

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Abstract

Fiji is often perceived as an exceptional case in critical colonial discourses. That is, despite ninety-six years of British colonial rule, indigenous rights to land was protected in the hands of its indigenous peoples, the *iTaukeis*, in addition to the preservation of its socio-political structure. The dissertation contends however that the very institutions that define *iTaukei* indigeneity have created land dispossession and disempowerment. The study examines the question: Why is it that the vast-majority of *iTaukei* landowners are perpetually economically marginalized despite owning almost ninety percent of the land in Fiji? This question is important because Fiji is an agricultural economy and therefore land is the single most important asset in economic production. Yet the owners of this important asset, the *iTaukeis* are marginalized from its productive use. Drawing from a variety of primary, secondary and archival sources the study makes the contention that the socio-political structure of *iTaukei* society articulated under the *Vanua*, and the institutional arrangement that regulates the rights of access to *iTaukei* land under the trusteeship role of the *iTaukei* Land Trust Board (TLTB), were colonial projects of exclusion, political oppression, ‘invisibilization’ and land dispossession. Such structures were established under the British colonial government to secure the availability of *iTaukei* land to non-*iTaukei* and corporations for economic development. *ITaukes* on the other hand, were placed on Native Reserves and restricted to subsistence agriculture. These structures continue to economically marginalize *iTaukei* in the post- colonial period. The dissertation further argues that the economic and political empowerment of *iTaukei* landowners both present and future hinges on institutional reforms in the

trusteeship role of the TLTB. This should include the nurturing of entrepreneurship of *iTaukei* landowners to become active participants in Fiji's agricultural economy, as oppose to subsistence agriculturalists, as well as, putting in place the necessary measures to ensure the accountability of the TLTB in the administration of *iTaukei* land. Further, contrary to claims of British humanitarian effort and colonial benevolence the dissertation argues that the annexation of Fiji was not dissimilar from British colonial objectives in the seizure of Australia in 1788 and the annexation of New Zealand in 1840. The annexation of Fiji on October 10, 1874 was a means of securing the economic and geo-strategic interests of Great Britain in the Islands of the Pacific, but one that was justified under the notion of colonial benevolence.

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Abbreviations

AP: Alliance Party

ACP: Asia Caribbean Pacific

ALTA: Agricultural Landlord and Tenant Act

ALTO: Agricultural Landlord and Tenant Ordinance

CSR: Colonial Sugar Refinery

EU: European Union

FLP: Fiji Labor Party

LCC: Land Claims Commission

NLC: Native Land Commission

NFP: National Federation Party

NLO: Native Land Ordinance

NLTA: Native Land Trust Act

NLTB: Native Land Trust Board

NLTO: Native Land Trust Ordinance

NLO: Native Land Ordinance

SDL: Soqosoqo Duavata Ni Lewe Ni Vanua

SVT: UCV: Unimproved Capital Value

TLA: *ITaukei* Land Act

TLC: *ITaukei* Land Commission

TLTB: *ITaukei* Land Trust Board

INTRODUCTION

Background

This project is a personal quest to understanding the disconnect between *iTaukei* 'ownership' of land, and the economic marginalization of *iTaukei* landowners as seen through my own personal experiences growing up initially in my village in Vunimono, and later in our Native Reserve, in Vuci South Road, Nausori, in the Fiji Islands. Issues of economic disparity between *iTaukei* and Fijians of Indian ancestry, or Fiji-Indians, struck me very early in my formative years. Growing up in the Native Reserve I experienced first-hand the struggles that *iTaukei* face in their quest to create decent livelihoods for themselves and their families. I was conscious of the socio-economic disparity between my kinfolks, who are *iTaukei* landowners, and Fiji-Indian tenants leasing on our *mataqali* land. The *mataqali* is a group of extended families that live and subsist in the Native Reserve. The *mataqali* is also the land-owning unit (LOU) within *iTaukei* society. The *mataqali* land is divided in two parts, namely the Native Reserve and the Non-Native Reserve. The former is designated to the *mataqali* or the LOU, while the latter is leased to non-*iTaukei* and corporations for economic development.

Our Fiji-Indian tenants generally live in decent homes, with multiple bedrooms and modern amenities, such as video sets, sofas, kitchens with inbuilt sink, kitchen cabinets, and gas stoves. Their homes also include in-built flush toilets and bathrooms. They generally have cars, tend to wear decent clothing, educated, travel overseas, and eat good food.

On the other hand, my kinfolks (including myself) live in simple homes with bamboo walls and thatched roofs, often with no electricity, with open cooking places. Toilets, which are often pit toilets, and bathrooms, are built outside and in some cases quite far from the main dwelling place. My grandfather, who later became the installed chief's spokesman, or the *mata ni vanua* in my village wears simple clothing and struggles every day to make ends meet. I remember seeing him walking the three-mile walk to the Native Reserve every day on a regular basis to attend to his farm. He returns home, often with cassava, coconuts and *rourou* (taro leaves) or *bele*, (Fijian spinach) which was what we eat almost every day. My grandmother would dive for *kai* or fresh water mussels, or go out fishing to supplement our diet. I often gather firewood from the river delta, since most of the cooking is done in the cooking place outside the main house. A kerosene stove was somewhat a luxury at the time when I was growing-up.

I began to question the apparent disparity between my kinfolks and our Fiji-Indian tenants on our *mataqali* land. If my kinfolks were landowners, then why is there a conspicuous sense of impoverishment and deprivation on our part? Also, if the government of the day is *iTaukei* led, which claims to represent the interests of *iTaukei*, then why is the vast-majority of *iTaukei*, living under conditions of scarcity. During the first seventeen years of post-colonial rule since 1970, Fiji was led by an *iTaukei* led government under the auspices of the Alliance Party. The Alliance Party was led by one of Fiji's paramount chiefs, the late Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara, who held the traditional titles of *Tui Nayau*, *Tui Lau*, and *Sau ni Vanua O Lau*. The party was also dominated by leading *iTaukei* chiefs, such as the late *Vunivalu* and *Tui Kaba*, Ratu Sir George Cakobau, the late

Tui Cakau, Ratu Sir Penaia Ganilau, the late *Tui Vuda*, Ratu Sir Josaia Tavaiaqia, and other leading *iTaukei* chiefs with the likes of the late Ratu David Toganivalu, Ratu William Tonganivalu. It was generally accepted at the time, that if the Fiji-Indian community controlled the economy, the political stage was reserved for *iTaukei*. But it was not just for *iTaukei* in general, rather, it was basically the political leadership by the *iTaukei* chiefly establishment. Such leadership was articulated under the notion of *Na Veiliutaki Vakaturaga* or *iTaukei* chiefly led leadership and sanctioned by the concept of divine rule, *Na Turaga Sa Mai Vua na Kalou*, that is *iTaukei* chiefs are ordained by God to rule. However, after decades of *iTaukei* led governments, the *iTaukei* continue to live under conditions of deprivation. How does one reconcile *iTaukei* ownership of *iTaukei* land, and *Veiliutaki Vakaturaga* on the one hand, and the economic deprivations of the vast-majority of *iTaukei* landowners on the other?

The stark reality of disempowerment hit me hard in 1982, (I was in grade 9) when my father applied for a loan with Housing Authority to build a home on our *mataqali* land. The Housing Authority is a state sponsored institution which provides housing loans to low income earners. In order to secure a housing loan my father needed a lease title as a security or collateral for the loan. While my father is a 'landowner', by virtue of belonging to the *mataqali*, such sense of 'ownership' is not recognized by the Housing Authority, neither does it constitutes legal entitlement to *iTaukei* land. My father could not secure a housing loan and we could not build a decent home on our *mataqali* land. Today the vast-majority of *iTaukei* landowners live on substandard housing in

overcrowded villages and in Native Reserves devoid of any form of economic opportunities and economic development with regard to the productive use of their land.

Problem Statement

This dissertation examines the question: Why is it that the vast-majority of *iTaukeis* landowners are perpetually economically disempowered and marginalized despite 'owning' almost ninety percent of *iTaukei* land? This question is important because Fiji's economy is driven by agriculture and tourism, and both of these industries are predicated on the exploitation of *iTaukei* land. According to the Asian Development Bank Report (ADB): *Country Partnership Strategy: Fiji, 2014–2018*, agriculture contributed 11 percent of the gross domestic product (GDP) in 2013, while tourism contributed almost 14 percent in the same year. (<https://www.adb.org>). This constituted 25 percent of the total GDP. Further, other industries that contribute to Fiji's economic development are land based as well. For instance, forestry and pine, real estate development, and 'other,' took up 28 percent of *iTaukei* land, according to the 2007 lease statistics report by the then NLTB (http://www.nltb.com.fj/land_statistics.html). This translated to 69,594 hectares of *iTaukei* land. These figures continue to increase as the sugar industry declines due the expiration, since 2000, of the agricultural leases issued under the Agricultural Landlord and Tenant Act (ALTA), and the end of the European preferential trading agreement in 2007, under the LOME and the Cotonou Agreements. As such, land, in Fiji's context is the single most important asset, or means of production in economic development.

Be that as it may, the owners of this important asset – the *iTaukeis*- have continued to be marginalized from its productive use and have therefore become economically relegated, disempowered and economically marginalized in *iTaukei* villages and Native Reserves.

This dissertation therefore seeks to understand the disconnect between *iTaukei* ownership of land on the one hand, and their economic disempowerment and marginalization on the other. In seeking to understand such disconnect the study critically examines the socio-political structure of *iTaukei* society articulated under the *Vanua*, and the institutional trusteeship role of the *iTaukei* Land Trust Board or the TLTB (formerly known as the Native Land Trust Board, or NLTB) and the ways in which such institutions shape the economic conditions of *iTaukei*, in the colonial and post-colonial periods.

Main Argument and Contribution to Scholarship

In this dissertation the author makes the argument that the economic marginalization of *iTaukei* is caused by the ways in which they were dispossessed from their *iTaukei* land. This dispossession was the result of the colonial land legislations that were enacted under the British colonial government which basically made *iTaukei* land available to non-*iTaukeis* initially in the sur industry through contractual leasing agreements administered under the *iTaukei* Land Trust Board (TLTB) for the economic development of the colonial state. This institutional arrangement was embraced and perpetuated by Fiji's post-colonial governments since political independence in 1970 where the availability of *iTaukei* land was extended by the TLTB to private and

multinational corporations for the economic development of the Fijian post-colonial state. The author makes the argument that the dispossession of *iTaukei* of their land occurs at three levels, as follows: (i) the dispossession from the control of their land; (ii) the dispossession from the productive use of their land; (iii) and the dispossession from the best arable and prime land through perpetual leasing arrangements.

The availability of *iTaukei* land, to non-*iTaukei* and corporations for economic development, entailed a cumbersome and insurmountable process of land registration which took almost six decades to achieve. It is important to point out that the process of land registration was critically important in positioning *iTaukei* land disposable to exploitation in the market economy. Land registration was a process that shaped the land tenure system of the *iTaukei* land to become conducive to largescale agriculture vis-à-vis the establishment of the sugar industry. In the context of Fiji, the process of land registration involved the homogenization of multiple traditional land tenure systems and socio-political structures of *iTaukei* society into standardize or uniform structures so that they become 'capitalism friendly' or disposable for exploitation in the market economy. The process of land registration eventually led to the re-organization of *iTaukei* society into a homogenized socio-political structure articulated under the *Vanua*, and the establishment of an institutional trusteeship system which embraces the principles of communal ownership of land, and land inalienability under the auspices of the TLTB, which then regulates the rights of access to *iTaukei* land, through a legally-binding, and contractual leasing arrangements with non-*iTaukei* tenants and corporations. Land

registration therefore land registration is a process of creating spaces or landscapes, for economic development.

The author's scholarly contribution to scholarship vis-à-vis the marginalization discourse of *iTaukei* in the colonial and post-colonial periods, and to critical colonial discourses, or postcolonialism, is as follows. In this dissertation, the author contends that the socio-political structure of *iTaukei* society articulated under the *Vanua*, and the institutional arrangement that regulates the rights of access to *iTaukei* land under the trusteeship role of the *iTaukei* Land Trust Board (TLTB), were colonial projects of exclusion, political oppression, 'invisibilization' and land dispossession. Such structures were established under the British colonial government to secure the availability of *iTaukei* land to *non-iTaukei* and corporations for economic development while *iTaukei* landowners were removed from the best arable and prime land and placed on Native Reserves where they were restricted to subsistence agriculture. The perpetuation of these institutions in the post-colonial period reproduces the same effects of disempowerment, dispossession and economic marginalization of *iTaukei* in the contemporary. In other words, the very institutions that define *iTaukei* indigeneity vis-à-vis the *Vanua* together with its 'traditional' land tenure system that embraces communal ownership of land and land inalienability which protects *iTaukei* land rights and the potential for land alienation in the context of the market economy under the institutional trusteeship of the TLTB, are in and of itself, producing and re-producing land dispossession, economic disempowerment and the economic marginalization of *iTaukei* in the post-colonial period.

A Brief Discussion on the *Vanua* and the *iTaukei* Land Trust Board (TLTB)

A substantive discussion on the history of *Vanua* and the TLTB occurs on chapter three, but for the purpose of setting the context of the dissertation it is crucial to provide a brief back ground on these institutions. The *Vanua* constitutes a regimented symmetrical system of social structure, within which *iTaukei* are socio-politically classified and organized (Campbell 1989: 160-161 France 1969:169; Ratuva 2002:4). It was institutionalized under the British colonial government as a means of homogenizing the socio-political heterogeneity of the *iTaukei* society (France 1969: 165). An inherent component of the *Vanua* is a 'traditional' land tenure system that embraces the communal ownership of *iTaukei* land and the principle of land inalienability (ibid).

In contemporary *iTaukei* society, the concept of land is articulated within the idea and substance of the *Vanua* both. (Halapua 2003:81; Lasaga 1984:22; Madraiwiwi 2008:20; Ratuva 2002:2; Ravuvu 1983:70).). The *Vanua* encompasses not only the soil or the geographical space, but it also encapsulates the *iTaukei* way of life. This includes social relations, cultural identity, a sense of belonging and permanence and a general sense of indigenusness. The *Vanua*, in this regard, is considered as authentically unique to *iTaukei*. However, in this dissertation, the author contends, that what presently constitutes the *iTaukei* society articulated under the *Vanua*, is a colonially institutionalized structure, which was part of the colonial project of land dispossession and political oppression masquerading itself under the notion of indigeneity, or what Simone Durutalo refers to as the "preservation of the paramountcy" of *iTaukei* interests (1986:31).

The existence of heterogeneity both in the traditional systems of land tenure and socio-political structure of the *iTaukei* society following the Deed of Cession in 1874 posed an insurmountable challenge to the British colonial government in reconciling the need to systematically appropriate *iTaukei* land for economic development, and the protection of *iTaukei's* rights to land (France, 1969: 110-111& 169-171). The multiple nature of the land tenure systems made it difficult to identify an indigenous uniformed land tenure system that could be used to regulate an organized access of *iTaukei* to their *iTaukei* land (ibid). This necessitated the enactment in 1880 of the *iTaukei* Land Act (TLA) (formerly known as the Native Land Ordinance or NLO) by Fiji's first substantive Governor Sir Arthur Gordon (ibid).

The enactment of the TLA led to fundamental and revolutionary changes in the *iTaukei* society. The Act effectively homogenized its land tenure system, and its socio-political structure, through the process of land registration. With regard to the former, the Act stipulated three changes to the multiple nature of *iTaukei* land tenure systems. The first, stipulated the communal ownership of *iTaukei* land, and in this regard 83% of Fiji's total land area was considered as the communally owned by *iTaukei*; the second stipulation, formalized the *mataqali*, (a group of extended families) as the customary landowning unit (LOU); and the third institutionalized of the principle of land inalienability as an inherent feature in the land tenure system of the *iTaukei* society.

As such, the *iTaukei* Land Act enacted in 1880 homogenized a complex land tenure system with the adoption of the principles of communal ownership and inalienability of land subsequently institutionalized it as a 'traditional' structure of *iTaukei* society (ibid, 129;

Lal 1992:15; Campbell 1989:160-161). Therefore, the traditional land tenure of *iTaukei* society is essentially a colonial construct.

It is important to note that while the legal stipulations of the TLA articulated the homogeneity of the “traditional” system of land tenure, a process of land registration was required in order for such homogeneity to materialize. This was also provided for by the TLA, which stipulated the establishment of the *iTaukei* Lands Commission or the TLC (formerly known as the Native Land Commission or NLC) to conduct the process of land registration. The TLC was responsible for the creation of a Register of *iTaukei* Lands as a means of differentiating *iTaukei* land from freehold and crown land (Dutt and Volavola 1977:22). This required the TLC not only to ascertain the extent of land that was occupied by the various *mataqali* but also identify and register traditional land boundaries belonging to different *mataqali* (France 1969: 129). Land Registration also involve the creation of topographic and aerial mapping of *iTaukei* land (Dutt and Volavola 1977:22).

But land registration was more to do with just mapping *iTaukei* land, it is a process of creating a standardize geographical space, or homogenizing complex structures, so that they are ‘capitalism-friendly’, or compatible to the market economy. In the context of Fiji, land registration was a process of homogenizing multiple traditional land tenure systems, and socio-political structures to ultimately render or position *iTaukei* land for economic development. The availability of *iTaukei* land for economic development in the Fijian context is not through land privatization, freehold, or fee simple, but through an institutional leasing arrangement under the ‘institutional trusteeship’ of the *iTaukei* Land Trust Board or the TLTB. This is an example of how the colonizer, uses legislations and

colonial institutions, in this case, the British colonial government, to landscape complex indigenous structures and deploys it in favor of capitalism, which thrives on the exploitation of natural resources such as land, the maximization of profits, and private ownership of property. The availability of *iTaukei* land through lease also affords the opportunity for the lessee to enjoy private property rights to the land throughout the duration of the contractual leasing arrangement, which the lessee can then use to access credits and other forms of developmental assistance to enhance socio-economic progress.

At the end of the land registration in 1939 *iTaukei* land was deployed as 'capitalism-friendly' initially through the establishment of the sugar industry in the colonial period, and later through tourism, forestry and pine, real estate development and other industries that involve the use of land. Land registration, therefore facilitates the availability of *iTaukei* land for exploitation in the market economy.

But, the process of land registration was difficult because, among other things *iTaukei* society was socio-politically fragmented (Lal 1992:15; Lloyd 1982:82; Sutherland 1992:12). Again, this will be discussed in detail in chapter 3 but, generally, the TLC concluded that in order to effectively register *iTaukei* land, it was imperative to standardize the ways in which *iTaukei* society was organized (France 1969:145). The need for the creation of socio-political homogeneity necessitated the institutionalization of the *Vanua* (ibid).

The *Vanua* was a hierarchical structure unique only in Nadroga, in Western Viti Levu (Sutherland 1992:12). Similar structure was also found in the eastern Lau group which featured social rigidity or stratification (ibid). Apparently, such structure was

adopted and institutionalized as the traditional socio-political structure of the *iTaukei* society. According to D.T. Lloyd the *Vanua* became the “cardinal feature” that defines the tenurial practices and socio-political structure of *iTaukei* society (1982:82). In 1914 the British colonial government institutionalized the *Vanua* as the central institution within *iTaukei* society (ibid, 168). This set the stage for the effective registration of *iTaukei* land. Despite the ongoing challenges faced by the TLC, the process of land registration was successfully completed in 1939 with a complete inventory of traditional land boundaries and a topographic map of almost 90% of *iTaukei* land (Dutt and Volavola 1977:33).

The homogenization of the land tenure system and socio-political structure of *iTaukei* society became a reality after the process of land registration was completed in 1939. At the end of the land registration process, the *iTaukei* land was ready to be exploited for the economic development of the British colonial state. But in order to be exploited, an institutional structure was needed to regulate an organized access to *iTaukei* land, both for *iTaukei* and economic actors in the colonial space.

In 1940 the *iTaukei* Land Trust Act (TLTA) was enacted to define, administer, and regulate the rights of access to *iTaukei* land (Lal 1992:102; Lasaga 1984:5; Norton 1977:26). As such, the TLTA subsequently established the *iTaukei* Land Trust Board (TLTB) to perform the responsibilities stipulated under the Act. The TLTB is an independent body which administers all *iTaukei* land “for the benefit of *iTaukei* landowners” in accordance with S4(1) of the TLTA. Also, S3(1) of the Act defines the TLTB as the trusteeship of *iTaukei* land (Boydell and Shah 2003: 5-6; Kurer, 2001:199-200). As the trusteeship of *iTaukei* land, the responsibility of the TLTB is three folds (ibid). The first entails the demarcation of

Native Reserves for the exclusive subsistence use of *iTaukei* landowners. The second is the administration of a leasing arrangement of *iTaukei* land outside of the Native Reserves, and the third, constitutes the collection and distribution of lease money.

It is important clarify that the TLTB administers two distinct rights of access to *iTaukei* land. The first consists of the customary rights of access, which is strictly reserved for *iTaukei* landowners. The TLTB regulates the customary rights of access specifically to the Native Reserve by virtue of belonging to the *mataqali*. The second entails the legal or statutory rights of access to *iTaukei* land by virtue of a contractual leasing agreement between the lessee and the TLTB. The leasing arrangement was initially to secure lease contract on *iTaukei* land on the part of Fiji-Indian tenants in the sugar industry. It is important to further point out, that the sugar industry was the economic backbone of the colonial state which was entirely dependent on the labor of Fiji-Indian workers. Indian workers were recruited from India between 1879 and 1916 to work in the sugar plantation under the supervision of the Colonial Sugar Refinery (CSR). Majority of these workers opted to stay on in Fiji at the end of their labor contract, as independent sugarcane farmers. It is also noteworthy to point out that the statutory or legal rights of access to *iTaukei* land was extended to private corporations and multinational companies after Fiji transitioned to political independence in 1970.

In retrospect, the TLTB administers a dual system of land tenure, namely customary, which is considered 'traditional,' and statutory tenure which can be termed as modern (Lloyd 1982:6). The former locks *iTaukei* in subsistence agriculture, with zero property rights to customary land, and zero prospect of access to credits and other forms

of developmental loans that are critically important in nurturing and establishing the socio-economic development. In this context, *iTaukei* are excluded from opportunities to participate and progress in the modern economic space. As such, *iTaukei* landowners are not only excluded from economic production but they are also dispossessed from productive use of their land. Further, the perpetual leasing arrangement administered by the TLTB has also dispossessed *iTaukei* from the best arable and prime *iTaukei* land. As the result they have become economically disempowered and marginalized. On the other hand, the legal or statutory rights of access to *iTaukei* land through contractual leasing arrangements facilitate non-*iTaukeis* and other economic actors in the productive use of the land. Under this arrangement, the lessees are able to exploit the value of property rights, that is valid throughout the duration of lease contract agreement to access developmental loans from financial institutions and special development assistance that are occasionally administered by the Fijian post-colonial governments. The ability to access such credits facilitates the lessee to engage productively in commercial agriculture, the securement of home loans, and loans for education purposes, as well as other forms of economic advancement. Understanding the implications of these two distinct tenurial practices and rights of access to *iTaukei* land is key in understanding not only the socio-economic disparity between *iTaukei* landowners and non-*iTaukei* tenants, but more importantly in understanding the economic marginalization of *iTaukei* landowners.

A Brief Discussion on the Theoretical Framework

This dissertation uses post-colonial theory to examine Fiji's colonial history that focuses on the impact of colonization on *iTaukei* and to critique the ways in which the *Vanua* and the TLTB are used as projects of oppression, dispossession, removal, exclusion, 'invisibilization' and economic marginalization. This is an attempt to not only to understand the economic marginalization of *iTaukei* in the post-colonial period, but also to provide an alternative perspective as to why *iTaukeis* are economically marginalized in the post-colonial era. (This will be discussed further in the literature review). Post-colonial theory critically examines the nature of colonial history that according to Robert Young entails:

...a history. . . of slavery, of untold, unnumbered deaths from oppression or neglect, of the enforced migration and the diaspora of millions of peoples - Africa, Americans, Arabs, Asians and Europeans, of the appropriations of territories and of land, of the institutionalization of racism, of the destruction of cultures and the super imposition of others (2001:4).

Further, post-colonial theory focuses on reactions to, and critical analyses of the cultural legacies of colonialism, from the perspectives of those who suffered its consequences (Said 1978: 1-9; Smith 1999:19-25; Thomas 1994: 195; Young 2001:4-5).

Colonialism in this sense is a process of subjugation of "one people by another", that entails conquest, exploitation, and the dispossession of the colonized (Young 2001: 4). Edward Said, articulates this process as "a British and French cultural enterprise" or the European - Atlantic power over the Orient (1978: 4). Fanon asserts it as an institutionalized form of violence; Taussig articulates it a culture of terror and a space of

death (1986:3-4); Memmi argues it as a space of racial and self- denigration (1965: 79); Cesiare asserts it, as space of brutality and cruelty sadism (1972:21); while Pappe describes it as a space of invisibility and marginality (2008:616-617). The theory embraces the complexity; the multiple analyses; and the multiple projects of colonialism, as a means of evaluating the devastating impact of colonization on the colonized or indigenous peoples.

Nicholas Thomas, a leading post-colonial theorist, argues for instance, that colonialism is multifaceted, fractured and complex (1992:195). This means that colonialism entails a multiplicity of colonizing projects designed to oppress, exploit, dispossess and marginalize colonized or indigenous peoples. Colonialism, Thompson argues, while global in reach, is devoid of a global culture. This is because colonialism is shaped not only by the agenda of the colonial powers, which varies, together with their own internal squabbling, but also by the local context, and the different means of indigenous resistance against colonial hegemony (ibid 66). As such colonial experience varies amongst colonial spaces, and is therefore complex.

Given the importance of colonial history, the dissertation critically examines the genealogies and trajectories of the *Vanua* and the ILTB as constituting Fiji's colonial history of oppression, dispossession, removal, exclusion, 'invisibilization' and economic marginalization. Apart from Edward Said, the study also engages the works of other authors such as Aime Cesaire, Albert Memmi, Frantz Fanon, Linda Tuhiwai Smith, Nicholas Thomas, Patrick Wolfe, Robert Young and others.

Significance of the Study

This study is important for the following reasons. First, it seeks to demystify the notion of British colonial benevolence. According to standard annexation discourse, the British annexed Fiji reluctantly, to protect a dying race as a result of “ongoing warfare and such “diabolical” customs of infanticide and cannibalism” (Brantlinger 2011: 27-28). Further, Fiji’s annexation was also driven by a moral obligation on the part of the Great Britain to protect the natives from the lawlessness instigated by British subjects (Sutherland 1992:20). Such narratives are advocated by predominantly white authors such as former British colonial administrator G. K. Roth, anthropologist W.R. Geddes and historian Deryck Scarr who basically articulate the benevolent rule of the British colonial government, with particular regard to the safeguarding of *iTaukei* rights to land, and the preservation of its socio-political structure. Roth, in *The Fijian Way of Life*, for instance, applauded the British colonial administration for embracing *iTaukei* land tenure system and its social system.

The most significant feature in Fijian social custom is the common ownership of land by social units of which all members are related through kinship, and the close association of land and the social unit has always been regarded by Fijians as a matter of preeminent importance (1973:51).

As such, Fiji’s first substantive governor, Sir Arthur Gordon took the most critical step in the history of British colonial rule in Fiji to consolidate these structures through his native land policy, namely the *iTaukei* land Act (ibid 87). Geddes adds to this by asserting that “despite their exposure to alien influences the Fijians have retained their traditional social structure to a remarkable extent” (1959:210). At the outset, the initiative taken by Gordon

to ensure the perpetuation of *iTaukei* society seems benevolent. However, the enactment of Gordon's *iTaukei* Land Act of 1880 was an integral component of the colonial projects of *iTaukei* land dispossession, removal and marginalization. The 'traditional' land tenure system that seemingly protects *iTaukei* land rights (which is administered under the TLTB) and the socio-political structure articulated under the *Vanua*, are colonial constructs which are in and of itself dispossessing, invisibilizing and marginalizing *iTaukei* landowners in the contemporary. This dissertation therefore rejects the notion of British benevolence. Such notion was used to camouflage British economic and geo-strategic interests in Fiji and the Islands of the Pacific as a whole. This is discussed in chapter five of the dissertation.

Secondly, this study is important because it also seeks to debunk the exceptionality of the *iTaukei* in the colonial experience. The *iTaukei* do not feature substantively in critical colonial discourses in Oceania as if they did not experience the kinds of exploitation, socio-economic marginalization and the dispossession of native land that indigenous peoples elsewhere experienced namely, the Aboriginals of Australia, the Kanaks of New Caledonia and the Maoris of New Zealand. There is an inherent assumption in the settler-colonial discourse, that despite colonization the *iTaukei* were, able to maintain their indigenous identity and culture, their native land, and their political supremacy in the post-colonial. In his widely read and highly praised article on *Settler colonialism and the elimination of the native*, Patrick Wolfe, a leading settler-colonial scholar articulates the following regarding Fiji's exceptionality in the colonial.

The question of genocide is never far from discussions of settler colonialism. Land is life-or at least, land is necessary for life. Thus the contests for land can be -indeed, often are-contests for life. Yet this is not to say that settler colonialism is simply a form of genocide. In some settler-colonial sites (one thinks, for instance, Fiji), native society was able to accommodate- though hardly unscathed- the invaders and the transformative socio-economic system that they introduced (2006:387).

The above articulates the enduring capacity of *iTaukei* indigeneity despite colonization and the imposition of the capitalist economic system. This means that notwithstanding colonization, *iTaukei* were still able to secure indigenous ownership of the native land, the preservation of their traditional socio-political order, or in a word, their indigeneity. In this context, since native land was not alienated, *iTaukei* were not eliminated -displaced, excluded and dispossessed. It was 'hardly unscathed'. This assumption is entrenched by the continuing dominance of *iTaukei* elites in Fiji's political sphere in the post-colonial period. This dissertation accentuates the exploitative nature of British colonialism in Fiji and its disempowering effects on *iTaukei* - that British colonialism in Fiji oppresses, exploits, displaces, dispossesses, excludes and marginalizes. This dissertation is an attempt to locate the predicament of *iTaukei* within the mainstream argument of post-colonial discourse, or critical colonial analyses.

Thirdly, the study is an attempt to articulate a critical narrative of British colonization from the 'locus of enunciation' or the perspective of an *iTaukei*. This narrative focuses on the oppression, exploitation, and the dispossession of *iTaukei* of their land, and their economic marginalization in the post-colonial period. This differs from the post-colonial narrative articulated from the perspectives of the Indian indentured laborers,

who despite their exploitation and brutal treatment have generally emerged as economically dominant in the post-colonial space. This is apparent in scholarly works based on the political upheavals and ethnic conflicts of 1987 and 2000 which in many ways misrepresented *iTaukei* as a disgruntled lot who perpetrated violence against Fiji-Indians out of covetousness. Such scholarly works written by mostly Indo Fijian scholars have represented *iTaukei* as indolent, improvident and violent, and Fiji-Indians as victims of indentured migrants, military coups and *iTaukei* nationalism. Such representations are often articulated by Brij Lal in *Broken Waves* and his edited volume on *Fiji Before the Storm elections and the politics of development*. Victor Lal and G.K. Gillion are also important in this context.

For instance, in *Fiji, Coups in Paradise: Race, Politics and Military Intervention*, Victor Lal made two different representations of a people, the former as perpetrators, and the latter as victims. Lal made references to the military and the Methodist Church as institutions that perpetrated violence and torture against the Fiji-Indian community.

... grim stories of the torture, rape and harassment of Indians by Fijian soldiers emerged, later collaborated by Amnesty International. According to reports, the Fiji Indians were beaten, forced to stand on sewage pools and subjected to other forms of humiliating treatment. A ban was imposed on any form of entertainment couple with the imposition of strict Methodist Sabbatarianism on Fiji's Hindus and Muslims (1990:232).

The Methodist Church and the Military represent the overwhelming majority of *iTaukei*. The Methodist Church, for instance represents over half of *iTaukei* population, majority of whom live in villages and Native Reserves. As an institution, the Methodist Church institutionalizes the notion of *Lotu* (religion) as an important component of the

Vanua. The connection between land and God is entrenched in the social and political fabric of *iTaukei* society under notions of *Kalou* (God), *Vanua* (land) and *Matanitu* (state and chiefly system). These notions are ideologically hegemonic, and is encapsulated under the declaration of “*Noqu Kalou, Noqu Vanua*, My God, and My Land. The importance of the Methodist Church became apparent when Fiji-Indian led governments came into power following elections results in 1987 and 200 respectively. In both instances the Methodist Church mobilized *iTaukei* community under these ideologies and created *iTaukei* sense of patriotism and nationalistic sentiments which culminated in the military overthrow of Fiji-Indian led governments.

Similarly, as discussed earlier, the military performs the role of the *bati* or the traditional warriors of the *iTaukei* chiefly establishment which see itself not only as the protector *iTaukei* chiefly led government but the entrenchment of *iTaukei* dominance in the political arena. Hence to talk about the Methodist Church and the military in the context of Fiji, is equivalent to talking about the vast-majority of *iTaukei* and the ideologies articulated above. Hence, when Fiji-Indian scholars demonizes the role of such institutions they are in many demonizing *iTaukei* society.

On the other hand, Victor represented the ancestors of the Indian indentured workers as follows:

The Fiji Indians, unlike their great grandparents are being marooned in their own homes, sulking and pondering about their future ... The Fijian coup d'état of May 1987 has a larger significance now for all so-called immigrants: how many years should they wait to become “natives”?... For the Fiji Indians the coup that outed their representatives from Parliament on 14 May 1987, 108 years to the day their ancestors were first introduced to work on sugar Plantations, arrested their progress from plantation to Fiji's Parliament.

The above representations conjure images of a people, the *iTaukei*, as violent, ungrateful to the economic contribution of the Fiji-Indian community, and greedy, while portraying Fiji-Indians as victims of forced migration, abandoned in a place they call home, and politically deprived of the opportunities to lead politically.

However, such discourse is one sided because it only accentuates the exploitation of Fiji-Indians in Fiji's colonial and post-colonial spaces. This discourse is not only racialized, but it camouflages the nature of exploitation and dispossession- that *iTaukei* experienced in the same colonial space. It is important to note that both ethnic groups were exploited, marginalized and experienced instances of colonial exploitation under the same colonial space. However, existing discourses on Fiji's post-colonial politics tends to focus more on the colonial experiences of Fiji-Indians, while very little is said about the experiences of political oppression, exploitation, economic exclusion and dispossession of *iTaukei* in their land, as a result of British colonization.

The military coups and ethnic conflicts in Fiji are reflections of the disaffection of *iTaukei* which have its roots in the ninety-six years of British colonialism in Fiji. The author makes the argument that *iTaukei's* disaffection is not caused by the presence of the Fiji-Indian community. Rather it is a result of the colonial policies and institutions that were put in place by the British colonial government for economic and political reasons. This dissertation focuses on the legislative and institutional land tenure framework that was established under British colonial rule to exploit *iTaukei* land for economic development, under the auspices of the TLTB, and largely at the expense of *iTaukei* landowners. Such legislations and institutions are embraced and perpetuated by Fijian post-colonial

governments which reproduced the same effects of dispossession, disempowerment and marginalization.

Finally, it is envisaged that the dissertation will create intellectual and public discourses on institutional land reforms, and socio-political, and cultural reforms. It is further envisaged that such discourses will have policy implications particularly on institutional reforms, that would foster entrepreneurship amongst *iTaukei* especially in commercial agriculture and other forms of economic development.

Methodology

The study uses both primary and secondary sources. Primary sources include newspaper articles and archival research while secondary sources consist of literature reviews relevant to the dissertation. It is also important to note, that an important source of information and insights is drawn from the author's personal experiences, observations and interactions with kinfolks, *iTaukei* on various levels of the *iTaukei* society (both in and outside of Fiji), Fijian neighbors and colleagues.

Chapter Outline

The order of the chapters is as follows. The Introduction introduces the dissertation. Chapter one consists of the literature review. Chapter two discusses the theoretical framework. The third chapter critically examines the reconstruction of the *iTaukei* society under the *Vanua* arrangement and the establishment of the *iTaukei* Land Trust Board (ILTB). Chapter four discusses British policy in the Islands of the Pacific and the politics of British colonial appropriation in the region. Chapter five examines Fiji's pre-colonial history between 1849 to 1874 and lead up to annexation, and a critical

examination of the annexation discourse. Chapter six entails the final analysis of the dissertation which articulates the ways in which the *Vanua* and ILTB are constitutive of colonial apparatuses of exploitation, oppression and dispossession of *iTaukei*. The Conclusion chapter consists of recommendations and concluding remarks.

CHAPTER ONE

THE ECONOMIC MARGINALIZATION DISCOURSE ON *ITAUKEI*: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Discussions about socio-economic marginalization of *iTaukei* are often framed by three major perspectives, namely: (i) race (ii) cultural relativism debate and (iii) class. This section reviews of the literature.

The Race Discourse

The discourse on race and the racial division are the constructions of the British colonial government and are therefore part of the socio-political, and economic configurations of Fiji's post-colonial development. These constructions have their roots in British colonial policy of compartmentalization which entailed the deployment of indentured Indian workers in the cane lines, under the Colonial Sugar Refinery (CSR), and the confinement of *iTaukei* in the peripheral spaces of the colonial economy - in the form of villages and Native Reserves under the Native Administration - headed by the Council of Chiefs. The segregation of the two ethnic groups under the British colonial government provided the breeding ground for racial distrust, suspicion and animosity (Lal 1992: 11-16; Norton 1990: 35-44; Ravuvu 1991:42-43; Sutherland 1992:55-59).

The entrenchment of ethnic polarity and racial tensions, therefore characterized the post-colonial period. The race discourse was inherited by the post-colonial cohorts of *iTaukei* chiefly and bureaucratic elites, as well as their Indo-Fijian counterparts, from the

British colonial government, which for ninety-six years had ruled Fiji on a platform of divide and rule. Consequently, the politics of race has featured prominently in Fiji's post-colonial development (Ali, 1986:8-9; Lal, 1992:224-242). This means that issues of struggles and conflicts relating to economic and political powers, electoral politics, resource allocation and land are articulated in terms of race. Until recently the national political discourse of Fiji was predicated largely on the politics of race and indigenous rights, a discourse that dominated Fiji's political landscape for the first seventeen years of post-colonial development.¹

The race discourse is shaped largely by the relationship between *iTaukei* and their land on the one hand; and Fiji-Indian agricultural tenants and their use of the native land on the other. Fiji's case is particularly interesting in that the discourse on race is

¹ Between 1970 and 2005 the race discourse or ethnic politics dominated Fiji's post-colonial politics. The politicization of ethnicity culminated in the overthrow in 1987 and 2000 of Indo-Fijian led governments by a *iTaukei* dominated military force. However, the overthrow of *iTaukei* led government in 2006 marks the shift in the discourse from the politics of ethnicity to that of intra-*iTaukei* struggles. The military government, under Col. Frank Bainimarama, (who is a *iTaukei*) assumed control of Fiji under the platform of clean- up campaign and sustainable democracy. Since taking control in 2006, the political discourse has focused on issues of corruption and class rule of *iTaukei* elites; common and equal citizenry; electorate, land and constitutional reforms. The shifting national political discourse since 2006 also featured the scrutiny of colonial constructed institutions such as the Great Council of Chiefs (GCC) and the Methodist Church which are seen as perpetrators of divisive and race based politics. Hence in 2007, the Great Council of Chiefs was disbanded and in March 2012, the GCC was formally de-established through the *iTaukei* Affairs Revocation Regulation Decree. Similarly, the Methodist Church, until recently, was also banned from holding its annual fundraising conference. After five years of government sanction, the Methodist church was allowed to resume its annual conference with strict conditions to stay away from politics. Since taking office Bainimarama orchestrated lawsuits against all key *iTaukei* elites for corruptive practices and their role in the overthrow in 1987 and 2000 of Indo-Fijian led governments. The former led to the establishment in 2007, of the Fiji Independent Commission Against Corruption (FICAC) whose function was to investigate and expose corruptive practices of state officials. Since its establishment a dozen of prominent *iTaukei* elites both chiefly and former state bureaucrats including businessmen and women were tried and jailed. The most recent conviction and incarceration involve the former *iTaukei* prime minister Laisenia Qarase who in August 2012 was found guilty of abuse of office and corruption.

intertwined with that of land, or the use of *iTaukei* land by an immigrant ethnic group (Nandan and Alam 2005: 4; Kabutaulaka and Rokolekutu 2008: 39). Hence discussion about the use of *iTaukei* land and who profits from it often evokes the discussions on race.

In these discussions, the underlying argument is the idea that Indo- Fijians have systematically exploited the *iTaukeis'* land to secure economic wealth at the expense of the *iTaukei*. (Davies and Gallimore 2000:17; Kabutaulaka and Rokolekutu, 2007:71). The marginalization of *iTaukei* is therefore perceived in racial terms (Davies and Gallimore, 2000: 17; Holtz, 2011:9; Sutherland, 1992:153). In order to understand this relationship, one has to understand that the sugar industry, which is the back-bone of Fiji's economy existed because of the labor of Fiji-Indian labor and tenants (Nandan and Alam 2005:4; Naidu and Reddy, 4: 2001). In fact, over eighty percent of those who involved in the sugar industry are Fiji-Indian tenants. Indo-Fijian tenants (Naidu and Reddy 2001:4; Holtz 2001:7). However, the land that is used to cultivate sugarcane belongs to the *iTaukei* which is leased to Fiji-Indian tenants.

As discussed earlier the TLTB administers two different types of land tenure. The first entails legal tenure and the second is the customary tenure. The former facilitates the legal rights of access to *iTaukei* land through a contractual leasing arrangement under the TLTB for the economic development while the latter provides customary rights of access to *iTaukei* land for subsistence economy in the native reserve, by virtue of being a member of the *mataqali*. The proponents of the race discourse argue that the economic marginalization of *iTaukei* has its origin in the exploitative nature of a

leasing arrangement under the ALTA which has led to the the substantial economic benefits for non-*iTaukei* Fiji-Indian sugarcane farmers and the perpetual economic marginalization of *iTaukei*.

The leading proponents of the discourse are John Davies and Courtney Gallimore whose work is entailed in a working paper entitled *Reforming the Leasing and the use of Agricultural Land in Fiji: An Economic Incentive Approach* (2000). In their argument Davies and Gallimore highlight three major ways in which *iTaukei* are exploited under the leasing arrangement stipulated under ALTA which has led to the marginalization (Davies and Gallimore 2000:6-11). This include cheap rent offered under ALTA in the leasing of *iTaukei* land, unfair leasing formula and the preferential trading agreement under the EU-ACP that has prospered the non-*iTaukei* community in the sugar industry (ibid).

Davies and Gallimore's argument has become influential particularly in the formation of affirmative policies orchestrated by *iTaukei* led governments. This became more pronounced under the Qarase government² in the beginning of the new millennium. The Qarase-led Soqosoqo Duavata ni Lewenivanua (SDL) party, for instance, used Davies and Gallimore argument to justify the creation of affirmative action policies in favor of *iTaukei*. (Fiji Government 2005: 14). In a document titled, *A Better Fiji for All* (2005), the SDL government articulated the following:

² Laisenia Qarase was the sixth *iTaukei* prime-minister from 2000-2006.

The Fijian landowners are not happy with the existing Agricultural Landlord and Tenant Act (ALTA), which governs the relationship between landowner and tenant. It has led to some of the lowest agricultural rental incomes in the world and eroded landowner rights and interests. ALTA has contributed to the impoverishment of landowners and has made them into the sugar industry's poor relations" (Fiji Government 2005: 13).

Despite the validity of Davis and Gillamore's argument, cheap lease, or the fact that lease is not based on the market rate, does not necessarily explain the economic impoverishment of *iTaukei*. In fact, the leasing arrangement under ALTA has made *iTaukei* more dependent on lease money as opposed to being active participants in economic production. Apart from its cheapness, lease money has trapped *iTaukei* into a web of economic dependency syndrome perpetually blinding them from envisioning any meaningful engagement with the land.

More importantly, Davies and Gallimore ignore the role of British colonization in the economic marginalization of *iTaukei* especially with regard to colonial policies and institutional structures put in place during colonial rule. The colonial government for instance, enacted a series of native regulations which included the prohibition of the commercial employment of *iTaukei* in the sugar industry and elsewhere (Lal 1992:13; Howard 1991:28-29). Such regulations excluded *iTaukei* from any form of wage earning capacity in the productive sector of the colonial economy. Furthermore, the establishment of an institutional land tenure system under the British colonial government further marginalized *iTaukei* economically.

The creation of the TLTB for example entrenched *iTaukei* as subsistent cultivators in the native reserves, which is largely unsuitable for large scale farming, while alienates the best arable native land to non-*iTaukei* through an institutional leasing lease arrangement. Hence, the economic marginalization of *iTaukei* is not necessarily the result of cheap rent, but rather their exclusion from commercial agriculture, which is crucial for economic empowerment.

In addition, Davies and Gallimore also overlook the fact that both *iTaukei* and Indo-Fijians were equally exploited in the same colonial space. Indo-Fijians were just as exploited as *iTaukei*. In fact, scholars such as Lal and Naidu have discussed the nature of exploitation and violence that Indian indentured workers experienced in Fiji and elsewhere (Lal 2004; Naidu 2004). Indian women in the cane lines for instance were subjects of rape while men were overtasked and treated like slaves. According to Howard, suicide amongst Indian laborers was rampant in the early years of the indentured system (1991:30). As such, the exploitative nature of the leasing arrangement and the subsequent marginalization of *iTaukei* had nothing to do with Indo-Fijians. Rather it was the making of the British colonial state, as a means of securing its economic survival, which was predicated on the dispossession of *iTaukei* land and Indo-Fijian labor. Hence, like the *iTaukei*, Indo-Fijians were also subjects of the exploitation under the agricultural leasing arrangement.

The colonialists' project as eviden elsewhere is grounded on the exploitation of the colonized; and one that systematically exploits the colonized. In this case the colonized

were both *iTaukei* and Fiji-Indians, whose, interests did not feature much in the colonial agenda. The British colonial government's agenda in collaboration with the Colonial Sugar Refinery (CSR) were geared towards economic security of and the development of the colonial state and maximization of profit for the latter. The fulfillment of these objectives did not benefit either of the colonized groups in question, although the *iTaukei*'s land and Indo-Fijian labor mattered significantly in meeting the colonial agenda.

The other problem with Davies and Gallimore's argument is that it exacerbates the racial tensions and distrust between the two ethnic groups. Such tensions have generated ethnic violence and political instability in the past. The national political discourse on land and race generated by *iTaukei* elites have fueled racial animosity, which led to *iTaukei*'s overwhelming support in the military overthrow of Indo Fijian led governments in 1987 and 2000 (Howard 1991:286-292; Norton 1990:133-152; Sutherland 2000:181-198). This is despite the fact, that in 1987 an *iTaukei*, Dr. Timoci Bavadra, was the prime minister in the Fiji-Indian led government. In this dissertation, the author argues that any meaningful understanding of the economic marginalization of *iTaukei* in general and *iTaukei* landowners in particular, should be framed within the critical colonial theories or the critical colonial discourse.

Cultural Relativism Discourse

The *iTaukei*'s economic marginalization is also explained through the theory of cultural relativism. Cultural relativism, which is a school of thought that critically examines the nature and role of values in a particular culture (Herskovits 1972:14). It is a

scientific approach of critiquing values and old-age philosophies inherent in traditional societies, using fresh, cross-cultural data gained from multi-cultural societies (ibid). Cultural relativism, is the summation of the habitual modes of thought of a group of people and how such mode of thought shapes particular behavior and mind-set. Those who advance this discourse, (in the context of *iTaukei*) argue that the economic marginalization of *iTauke* is the direct result of the subsistence economic mindset and the communal nature of *iTaukei* societies. Those who (among others) advance this argument include Dorassami Rao, Ropate Qalo and Helen Hughes.

According to Rao, the communal nature of *iTaukei*'s cultures and societies hinders the potential for entrepreneurship and *iTaukei* economic empowerment (2004: iv). Consequently, Rao argues, despite the affirmative actions accorded to *iTaukei* in an effort to enhance their participation in economic development project, it has not translated to economic progress (ibid, 32). After political independence both *iTaukei* and Indo-Fijians were on equal footing, Rao argues, but while the latter have exhibited rapid economic development, the former have lagged-behind (ibid). Rao maintains that economic progression hinges on entrepreneurial disposition inherent in cultures. He argues that the problems associated with *iTaukei*'s communal culture is exacerbated by "poor education, lack of hard work and commitment, poor financial management, absence of material culture, inability to raise venture capital, short term planning perspective, and a lack of ability to save funds for future investment" (ibid). On the other hand, the culture of individualism inherent in Indo- Fijians has contributed to their economic development and is further enhanced by "exposure to good education, risk taking skills, hard work

and perseverance, sound financial management, ability to raise capital....” (ibid). Rao maintains that the pressure of communal culture made it difficult for *iTaukei* to transition from subsistent lively hoods to economic production in the cash economy (ibid 32).

Ropate Qalo is also a proponent of this school of thought. In his book *Small Business: a study of a Fijian family* (1997), Qalo argues that indigenous culture constitutes a major cause for the relative economic failures of *iTaukei* (1997:65). Qalo asserts that the subsistence economic mindset, is a major hindrance towards entrepreneurship (ibid 143). According to Qalo, *iTaukei*, do not consciously attempt to create wealth. He argues that *iTaukei* who are engaged in commercial fishing and cash crop farming do not really see assets such as trucks, outboard motors and power machines as forms of investment, or as the basis of creating wealth. These assets according to Qalo:

.....are used in a manner that is similar to the use of traditional tools and utensils such as digging stick, a dugout canoe, bamboo raft, thatched houses or the leaves that are used in feasts or daily meals.....They are treated as they have no market value let alone resale value (ibid).

Another proponent of this discourse is Helen Hughes, who argues that collectivist cultures and particularly the communal ownership of land hinders indigenous entrepreneurship not only in Fiji, but in the Pacific Islands region as a whole (2003:11-12). According to Hughes, Pacific Islanders’ economic advancement is stifled by the traditional and spiritual beliefs that are attached to land. As a result, Hughes proposes that individual property rights to land are crucial to the economic development of *iTaukei* and other Pacific Islanders (ibid).

However, the cultural relativism discourse is flawed because it is ahistorical. This means that as a tool of analysis, cultural relativism ignores the role that history plays in shaping the present. In other words, cultural relativism disregards the colonial period which is an important epoch in human history, and its role on the marginalization and degradation of indigenous peoples. As such, the idea that *iTaukei* are economically marginalized, because of the absence of entrepreneurial disposition (that is derivative of culture) ignores the historical and colonial contexts which shape the socio-economic and political conditions of the former colonized. Experiences of Fiji's *iTaukei* are therefore not unique. The history of colonization is characterized by violence, dehumanization and the evisceration of indigenous peoples. Colonialism constitutes projects of expropriation, oppression, exploitation, racial denigration of indigenous peoples, predicated on violence (Fanon 1967:10-11; Memmi: 1965:9).

In this regard, the marginalization of indigenous peoples, such as *iTaukei* should be understood within the context of colonialism, as oppose to cultural milieu. Fiji's colonial experience was not dissimilar from colonial experiences elsewhere; such as the Aborigines of Australia, the Maoris of Aotearoa, the Kanaks of New Caledonia, the Putumayo Indians of Peru, or the indigenous people of Brazil. Contrary to the myth of British colonial benevolence, British colonization in Fiji featured economic exploitation, displacement, expropriation, political oppression, land dispossession, systematic suppression of anti-colonial resistance and even massacres (Howard 1991:14-16; Nicole 2011: 217; Sutherland1992:28-29).

This will be discussed substantively in Chapter six, but at the outset, the economic disempowerment of *iTaukei* should be understood within the context of colonial institutions and policies put in place by the British colonial government. The establishment of the Council and Chiefs and the Fijian Administration in 1876 created a space of political subjugation (Howard 1991: 7; Sutherland 1992:27-28). Such colonial institutions for instance led to the subjugation of *iTaukei* under the authority of *iTaukei* chiefs. Under this arrangement *iTaukei* were ruled indirectly by the British colonial state through the institutionalized authority of traditional chiefs. This ensured social control and political stability within indigenous Fijian society. Also, under this arrangement, *iTaukei* were deployed as subsistent cultivators bounded by strict customary regulations which included the prohibitions of settling in towns, or engaging in any form of commercial employment in the sugar industry or elsewhere. Furthermore, the Council of Chiefs and the Fijian Administration also provided the space for economic exploitation through the Native Tax Policy which compels *iTaukei* to pay tax in goods (communal tax field). The Native Tax Policy played a crucial role in subsidizing the colonial economy. Between 1875 and 1879, for instance 30 percent of the colonial revenue accrued from the communal tax field which financed the labor immigration, large scale plantation, and sugar mill construction (Sutherland 1992:29; Knapman quoted in Lashley, 2010: 175). As such, the Native Tax Policy represents colonial policy of exploitation through what Sutherland refers to as “the direct appropriation of surplus peasant production” (1992:29). In addition, the establishment of the *iTaukei* Land Trust Board (formerly known as the Native Land Trust Board) and the enactment of Native Reserve Policy in 1940 led

to the further marginalization of *iTaukei* (Lal and Applegate 2001:11-12; Sharma 1999:2-4). The former was designed to provide an institutional leasing arrangement of native land to Indo-Fijian farmers, primarily in the sugar industry, while the latter was to place *iTaukei* in reservation as subsistent cultivators. As such while *iTaukei* were confined and locked within the subsistent economy, their land was institutionally appropriated for the commercial production of sugarcane, under the guise of indigenous trusteeship vis-à-vis the *iTaukei* Land Trust Board or ILTB. The absence of entrepreneurial disposition amongst *iTaukei* is therefore the result of the colonial institutions of dispossession, exclusion and exploitation.

Also, while Rao articulates the entrepreneurial disposition of Indo-Fijians as emanating from their enterprising and industrious culture, he overlooks the leasing arrangement of native land, which has substantially benefitted Indo-Fijian farmers at the expense of *iTaukei*. Rao disregards the fact, that the institutional framework created by the British colonial state to regulate the leasing of native land has largely benefitted Indo-Fijian farmers, particularly in the sugar industry. The leasing arrangement provided Indo-Fijian sugarcane farmers 30 years of agricultural lease on native land under the Agricultural Landlord and Tenant Act or ALTA, with a lease rate that is amongst the lowest in the world. In fact the land lease paid to *iTaukei* under ALTA constitutes only 2.4% of the gross agricultural production in the sugar industry.

While at the same time the sugar that is produced from these canes is sold under the European Union preferential trading agreement that is often above the international

market price. Hence while Indo-Fijian farmers paid cheap lease on native land, their sugar is sold at the maximum price under E.U preferential trading agreement. As such, Indo-Fijian farmers prospered economically not necessarily as the result of their entrepreneurial disposition but because of an institutional environment that was positioned in their favor largely at the expense of *iTaukei*. As Gallimore and Davies argued, *iTaukei* were deprived of almost \$F1billion of the real value of their land during the thirty-year lease of native land under ALTA (2000:11).

Furthermore, while Rao discusses the role of British colonization vis-à-vis colonial institutions such as the Fijian Administration and Council of Chiefs, in stifling economic entrepreneurship and development of *iTaukei*, his discussion fails to capture the exploitative nature of colonialism (Young 2001:4-6; Said 1978: 2-6; Smith 1999: 23-24). Colonialism is a project of dispossession, expropriation and exploitation predicated on violence, oppression and racial denigration (Cesaire 1972:170-176; Pappé, 2008:616). Consequently, the process of colonialism led to all forms of economic, political, social, psychological and emotional disempowerment as well as the denigration of indigenous peoples. The establishment of the sugar industry in Fiji, under the British colonial government, for instance led to the dispossession of *iTaukei* of their land through perpetual leasing arrangement. While *iTaukei* did not have their land seized through land treaties or confiscations which occurred with the New Zealand Maoris, (with reference to the Treaty of Waitangi in 1840); or the outright seized of land in the case of Australian Aborigines (through *terra nullius*); instead *iTaukei*'s land was expropriated through an

institutional leasing arrangement via the ILTB. Such arrangement witnessed the expropriation of the best agricultural land, while *iTaukei* were marginalized to the native reserves as subsistent cultivators on land which was largely inaccessible and unsuitable for agriculture (Lal, 1992: 184). This means that *iTaukei* were not only institutionally alienated from the best part of their native land, but they are also alienated from its productive or commercial use. This effectively deprived *iTaukei* from any form of meaningful participation in economic development. Hence, the absence of entrepreneurial disposition among *iTaukei*, or their inability to accumulate wealth, is not cultural but rather originates from an institutional arrangement under the British colonial state, and one that continues to reproduce itself after political independence.

Class Discourse

Finally, the class discourse has also been advanced, to articulate *iTaukei*'s economic marginalization. The class discourse entails the idea that the economic marginalization of *iTaukei* is the result of the exploitation of *iTaukei* elites, which includes traditional chiefly elites as well as military, bureaucratic and professional elites. Among others, the most notable are the works of Simione Durutalo, William Sutherland, Michael Howard, and Winston Halapua.

Durutalo, in his book, *The Paramountcy of Indigenous Fijian Interests and the politicization of ethnicity*, (1986) argues that the economic marginalization of the *iTaukei* is the result of the colonial institutions of "economic exploitation and metropolitan surplus extraction through political oppression" inherited and perpetuated by a class of ruling

chiefly elites (1986:2). The former refers to the exploitation of *iTaukei* of their resources such as land and labor while the latter entails the incorporation of the Fiji's economy into the global economic system which favors the interests of former colonial powers at the expense of former colonies' economies.

At the national level, the chiefly ruling elites governed the *iTaukei* with repression and considerable restraint on democratic expression. Traditional allegiance and loyalty towards chiefly rule created a culture of silence within *iTaukei* society which chiefly elites use to accumulate wealth. (ibid: 46-47). Until recently chiefly elites, for instance, have enriched themselves by way of receiving the biggest share in the distribution of lease money. Prior to the Land Use Decree in 2010 the chiefly establishment alone received 30% of lease money, while 45% is shared by the *iTaukei*. The rest which is 25% is institutionally appropriated by the *ITaukei* Land Trust Board (TLTB).³

Durutalo also uses the concept of patron-client relationship to articulate the exploitative nature of chiefly class rule. The concept dates back, to the system of servitude widespread in Europe in the middle- ages known as serfdom where politically and economically powerful patrons, such as landlords who exploit landless and indebted peasants for economic and political gains.

³ The distribution of land lease has changed over the years. The percentage that ILTB deducts for instance has decreased from 25% to 20% in 2000. In 2003 this was further reduced to 15%. In 2010, the military administered government of Bainimarama eliminated the shares of the chiefly establishment and decreed the equal distribution of lease money among all *iTaukei*, while maintaining the institutional fee of the ILTB.

In the case of Fiji, *iTaukei* commoner support for chiefly class rule is reciprocated by material goods, access to state resources, low interest loans, appointment to government boards, and public corporations either through legal or illegal means (ibid 38-39). Clients in this context constitute an informal network of alliances which include educated individuals in the urban centers to peasant commoners in remote villages. In this way chiefly elites secure the allegiance and loyalty of *iTaukei* commoners towards their class rule. The class exploitation of chiefly and bureaucratic elites is entrenched through the state, in the context of Gramsci's notion of the state. This refers to the ways in which the state is used as a party block to evolve and institutionalize the ideologies of the ruling class (ibid 49).

This entails the institutionalization of what Durutalo refers to as the 'four 'R's namely, Ratuism, Royalism, Religion and Rugby. *Ratuism* articulates the notion of the divinity of *iTaukei* chiefs or the idea that chiefs are divinely ordained as natural rulers, and therefore warranting the unquestionable loyalty of ordinary *iTaukei*. The intent of such notion, Durutalo argues, is to ensure that *iTaukei* identify the protection of chiefly hegemony or chiefly class rule with the preservation of the paramountcy of *iTaukei* interests amidst the economic superiority and political aspirations of Indo-Fijians – camouflaging the *iTaukei* chiefly with the politics of ethnicity.

Royalism is the veneration of the British monarch by *iTaukei* chiefly elites to internalize the importance of aristocratic rule amongst and within *iTaukei* society. Religion refers to the Christian Religion with specific reference to the Methodist Church

of Fiji that according to Durutalo is used by the chiefly class oligarchy to promote loyalty to chiefs. As a predominantly *iTaukei* institution, the Methodist Church also serves to accentuate the differences between *iTaukei* and Indo-Fijians very few of whom are Christians. Finally, as *iTaukei* sports rugby constitutes a vital part of chiefly rule and *iTaukei* manhood military service.

William Sutherland also attributes the economic marginalization of *iTaukei* to the class rule of chiefly elites. In his book *Beyond the Politics of Race* (1992) Sutherland traces the colonial trajectory of *iTaukei*'s aristocratic rule and the ways in which it is deployed in a racially polarized post-colonial space. Like Durutalo, Sutherland argues that *iTaukei* aristocratic rule is embodied within the Fijian state under the auspices of the chiefly Alliance Party (1992:4). The creation of Fijian aristocracy had its origin in 1876 following the creation of the Fijian Administration and the Council of Chiefs as machineries of colonial domination. The colonial government ruled *iTaukei* through these institutions. These institutions also institutionalized the role of *iTaukei* chiefs. Sutherland's analysis of indigenous class rule focused on a time frame, which began in 1970 (following Fiji's political independence) and ended in 1992 leading up to Fiji's seventh national election. Sutherland analyses the ways in which the class interests of *iTaukei* elites manifest itself during the defeat of the Alliance Party and the emergence of a commoner *iTaukei* Prime-Minister and an Indo-Fijian dominated government, following the 1987 national election.

The economic marginalization of the *iTaukei*, is the result of the class exploitation of *iTaukei* chiefly and bureaucratic elites which according to Sutherland is featured on

two levels in Fiji's politics (ibid). The first entails the deployment of the dominant class interests within the context of Fiji's racial polarity, and the second, constitutes the ways in which class tensions are featured amongst *iTaukei* themselves. The latter refers to the tensions between chiefly elites and commoners, eastern and western chiefs as well as the urbanite and rural dwellers. Sutherland contends that the *iTaukeis'* aristocrats deploy and entrench their class interests under the guise of ethno- Fijian nationalism in a racially polarized state (ibid). *iTaukei* elites, Sutherland argues, have successfully presented themselves as the guardian of indigenous Fijian interests in the face of Indo-Fijian economic dominance and political aspirations. Such representation not only camouflaged the class interests of *iTaukei* chiefly elites, but it also thwarted the political objectives of their Indo-Fijian counterparts. The defeat of the Alliance Party in the 1992 election by the Labor Coalition, Sutherland argues, marked the collapse of the *iTaukeis'* class rule, and ushers an era of commoner as well as Indo-Fijian rule. However, given Fiji's racial polarity, the *iTaukei* were apprehensive and suspicious towards the overwhelming majority, of Indo-Fijians in the new government.

Such fear and suspicion were captured by the defeated chiefly aristocrats, which was then used, to mobilize the *iTaukei* under the pretext of ethno-nationalism. This led to the establishment of the *iTaukei* Movement, which became the platform that articulates the *iTaukei* anti-sentiments against the Indo-Fijian led government, and indigenous rights for political supremacy. Consequently, a mass demonstration was organized by the *iTaukei* Movement on May 10th 1987, which culminated in the military overthrow of the

Indo-Fijian led government. In his observation, Sutherland contends that the attack that was mounted against the Indo-Fijian government and its eventual overthrow was not necessarily driven by race factor, but rather, it was predicated on the intent to restore the class rule of the defeated *iTaukei* chiefly and state bourgeoisie elites. Sutherland puts as follows:

Riding on the backs of the Fijian masses-workers, peasants, and the unemployed-the disgruntled Fijian elites projected the former's disadvantaged class condition as a racial problem, a 'Fijian' problem. And the cause of their predicament was, the demagogues claimed, a racial one-the Indians, who were not only 'economically dominant' but now politically dominant as well (ibid, 182).

Sutherland also highlights the presence of class struggles within the *iTaukei*. He argues that the 1987 coups, which were meant to destabilize the Indo-Fijian led government and entrench the political supremacy and economic interests of the *iTaukeis*, has nevertheless produced class struggles amongst the *iTaukei*. The *iTaukei* have somewhat realized, according to Sutherland, that the coups which were supposed to ameliorate their economic plight, have essentially benefitted the *iTaukei* ruling class. Hence the presence of intra-*iTaukei* struggle.

Michael Howard expands the class discourse in his book: *Fiji: Race and Politics in an Island State* (1991). Howard argues that the economic marginalization of the *iTaukei* is the result of the class rule of chiefly and bureaucratic elites whose exploitative and repressive rule is camouflaged by a politics of patronage and the appeals towards communalism (1991:7-8). According to Howard, *iTaukei* chiefly elites, whom he refers to

as the eastern chiefly oligarchy dominated the political stage during the first seventeen years of Fiji's post-colonial development under the auspices of the Alliance Party led by Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara, a paramount chief and Fiji's first *iTaukei* prime minister. At the national level, the Alliance Party articulated their class rule, Howard argues on the principles of stability, the denial of class struggles and the paramountcy of *iTaukei* interests. At the local level the chiefly led party governed the *iTaukei* with repression with considerable restraint on democratic expression while very little effort on *iTaukei* economic development.

Winston Halapua further advances the class discourse in his book, *Tradition, Lotu and Militarism in Fiji* (2003). Halapua argues that *iTaukei* are systematically impoverished as a result of the exploitation of the *iTaukei* ruling class, which he refers to as *turagaism* or the *turagaist* system of exploitation (2003: 112). According to Halapua *turagaism* consists of *turaga* (traditionally installed chiefs); *bati* (traditional warriors—the military elites); and *lotu* (clergies of the Methodist Church). The *bati* is a particular clan in the Fijian society whose traditional role is primarily to fight and protect the chiefs. This traditional role Halapua argues is transferred to the military. The military therefore assumes the traditional role of the *bati* as the protector and defender of *iTaukei* chiefly rule in the modern state. In fact, the first coup maker, Lt. Colonel Sitiveni Rabuka echoed this role in justifying the military overthrow the Indo-Fijian led government in 1987 following the national election which witnessed the defeat of the chiefly *iTaukei* led government (Lal 2011: 30; Ryle 2011: 47).

According to Halapua, *turagaism* is predicated on the ideology of *noqu kalou, noqu vanua*-my land my god and my governance (2003:113). This refers to the claim that political power is unreservedly the domain of *iTaukei* and the *vanua* as oppose to *vulagi* (visitors or non-*iTaukei*) a term that is often used to refer to Indo-Fijians. The concept of the *vanua* represents indigenous notion of identity, which embraces distinct culture, language, and a sense of interconnectedness with fauna and flora (Madraiwiwi 2008:20; Ratuva 2002:2; Ravuvu 1983:70).

Halapua stretches the concept of the *vanua* to include the socio-political and economic aspirations as well as the stewardship of the eco-system for future generations (2003: 81). However, more importantly, the *vanua* also entails the veneration of *turagaism* and its preeminence at all levels of native Fijian society. Hence the idea of *noqu Kalou, noqu vanua* constitutes the ideological justification which serves to entrench the class rule *iTaukei* ruling elites. Such leadership is legitimized by the *lotu* or Christianity, which emphasized on the divinity of the *turaga*. In this regard the Methodist Church and its clergy play a crucial role in advocating the idea of *na turaga sa mai vua na kalou* meaning - the divine right of the chiefs.

The traditional and spiritual justifications of chiefly rule, Halapua argues, not only mask the class rule of *turagaism* and their accumulation of material wealth, but it also constituted the ideological legitimization upon which such privileged rule is preserved and perpetuated.

Halapua further argues that a new cohort of collaborators was added to the *iTaukei* ruling class after the 1987 coups (ibid 127-128). This includes academics, bureaucrats, entrepreneurs and from other professionals. Key among these commoner professionals, according to Halapua, is the access to state resources and their role in the formulation of policies relating to its distribution and its implementation (Ibid 12). Such access and their critical role, argues Halapua, allow them to influence the flow of state resources in ways that benefits them and their *iTaukei* aristocrats' collaborators. In this way, commoner elites function to collaborate with *iTaukei* political elites to benefit from the flow of state resources. This is evidenced in ways in which affirmative action policies following the 1987 coups in favor of *iTaukei* actually promoted the economic aspirations of the *iTaukei* ruling class (ibid 133).

Halapua asserts that the pervasive nature of poverty amongst *iTaukei* is attributed to the class exploitation of the ruling class. The causes of poverty, Halapua argues, should be located "in the very core of the exploitation of by those who are in power and who control the resources" (ibid 148). In discussing the concept of poverty Halapua makes the point that poverty line, as an analytical tool to determine poverty, does not capture the specific context of Fiji (ibid 147). He therefore introduces the notion of the cultural dimension of poverty in which he explores the ways in which *iTaukei* ruling class exploits the "Fijian constructed cultural tradition" and its link particularly to the economic impoverishment of *iTaukei*. In his research Halapua concludes that the ruling *iTaukei* elites, led by the traditional chiefly elites, have exploited the culture of *iTaukei*

subservience and traditional loyalty to secure their accumulation of wealth and entrench their position of economic and political superiority at the expense of the masses, under the guise of guardianship. In articulating the ironical nature of such relationship Halapua puts it as follows:

Those who are affected by poverty are victims not of their own making but are victims of the abuse of their loyalty by those who were designed to be their guardians...(ibid 150).

The class discussion has broadened the understanding of the politics of post-colonial rule in Fiji and the marginalization of *iTaukei*. However, the class discourse is incomplete without a broader discussion of the role of colonization and its impact on indigenous peoples.

Conclusion

This dissertation contends that an understanding of the economic marginalization of indigenous peoples should be understood within the colonial discourse -both at the national and global contexts. In other words, discussion on the economic marginalization of the colonized should be predicated on critical analyses of colonization and the ways in indigenous peoples are featured in the colonial agenda. The colonialist project has already been discussed is predicated on the expropriation of natural and human resources and the dispossession of indigenous peoples resulting in their marginalization.

In the case of Fiji, the marginalization of *iTaukei* was primarily caused by the institutional land tenure system created by the British colonial state. As a colonial

institution of dispossession, *iTaukei* Land Trust Board (ILTB) denies the legal rights of access that is essential in the economic development of *iTaukei* both in the sugar industry (during the colonial era) and other forms of economic production such as root crop productions, real estate development, micro-finance and other forms of commercial development.

While *iTaukei* land has been exploited for profit through sugar production, tourism and real estate development among other forms of commercial development, the owners of the land, the *iTaukei* are locked within a subsistent economic base, alienated and from its productive use and economically marginalized. The economic marginalization of the *iTaukei*, is therefore a colonial construct. To put it more bluntly, the economic impoverishment of the *iTaukei* is a direct result of British colonization. The existing intellectual debate on the economic marginalization of the *iTaukei* ignores any serious discussion on British colonialism in Fiji with specific regards to the ways in which *iTaukei* were displaced, dispossessed, and disempowered. This dissertation contends that any meaningful understanding of the economic marginalization of the *iTaukei* should be framed with the critical colonial discourse, or the post-colonial theory.

CHAPTER TWO THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Introduction

. . . colonization, I repeat, dehumanizes. . . the colonial activity, colonial enterprise, colonial conquest. . . is based on contempt for the native and justified by that contempt . . . (Cesaire 1972:19-20).

The postcolonial does not privileged the colonial. It is concerned with the colonial history only to the extent that that history has determined the configurations of the power structure of the present (Young 2001:4).

This study uses post-colonial theory to examine the multiple dimensions of colonialism both as a concept, and an activity; and to accentuate how the economic marginalization of the *iTaukei- tawa vanua* should be understood within the context of the colonial encounter. I begin with a discussion on Edward Said's concept of Orientalism, which will be followed by a juxtaposition of Linda Tuhiwai Smith's and Robert Young's notion of colonialism. It is intended that the preceding discussion will set the context for colonialism. Edward Said, discusses colonialism as a form of European cultural domination over the colonized (1978: 2-9). This cultural domination is reflected through the derogatory representations of the colonized, by way of arts, poems, movies, novels, and academic discourse – a process that he calls Orientalism (ibid 2). It articulates the primitive, uncouth and inferior nature of the Orient or the colonized from the perspective of the Occident that is the West or European-American.

According to Said, Orientalism defines a dominant-power relation between the colonizers, whom he describes as the Orientalist or the Occident; and the colonizer or the Oriental. The former refers initially to the British, French, and Americans, while the later, refers to India and the Bible land or the Middle Eastern region. The relationship between the Occident and the Orient Said argues “is a relationship of power, of domination, of varying degrees of complex of complex hegemony. . .” (ibid 5). Orientalism entails the representation of the colonized through the Western academic discourses, via institutions, vocabulary, scholarships, imageries, doctrines and colonial bureaucracies where the Orient or the colonizer is the subject, while the Orientalist or the colonizer, is the main authority (ibid). Such representation is attributable to what Said describes as “the high headed executive attitude of the nineteenth century and early twentieth century European colonialism” (ibid 2).

This discussion is critical to explaining and understanding the colonization of Fiji, with regard to the reconstruction of the socio-political structure and system of land tenure of the *iTaukei* society. Such “high headed executive attitude” of European colonizers is reflected in the executive decision of Sir Arthur Gordon, Fiji’s first substantive Governor, who single handedly authorized the reconstruction of the *iTaukei* society on the basis, of the linear theories of nineteenth century evolutionary anthropology. This will be discussed substantively later in the dissertation, but Gordon’s decision was based on what Brij Lal describes as an “exaggerated and misplaced sense of intimate acquaintance with Fijian language and society” (1992:15). Gordon’s dogmatic decision is reflected in Said’s articulation of orientalism as a corporate institution that deals with the Orient in

ways that he describes as “Western style for dominating, restructuring and having authority over the orient” (1978:3). As will be shown in the dissertation, Gordon’s assertion to reconstruct of *iTaukei* society was done without the acquiescence of the *iTaukei* themselves. Hence, Said’s concept of orientalism is critical to understanding the nature of colonial rule in the case of Fiji.

Juxtaposition of Smith’s and Young’s Concepts of Colonialism

Smith’s notion of imperialism captures the multiple analyses of the ways in which European hegemony is entrenched in every sphere of the post-colonial space.

This does not necessarily subsume colonialism under the concept of imperialism, but rather, the study considers colonialism as one of the ways in which imperialism expresses itself. Hence, in building the theoretical framework the study examines the different layers of colonialism and how they intersect with, or diverge from Smith's notion of imperialism, and more importantly, to identify the dimensions of colonialism that is relevant in the case of the *iTaukei*.

According to Smith imperialism and colonialism are linked whereby colonialism is one form of imperialism. In *Decolonizing Methodologies* (1999), Smith identifies four ways in which imperialism is articulated. The first being imperialism as a form of Europe’s economic expansion in the late nineteenth century, in search of raw materials markets and capital investments. This necessitates the need to appropriate colonies and subjugate indigenous peoples who were seen, as obstacles in achieving European’s economic agenda. Although it is important to note that in other instances indigenous

peoples were also used as 'commodities' for colonialists' economic agenda, such as Trans-Atlantic Slavery, and blackbirding in the case of Papua New Guinea (PNG), Solomon Islands and Vanuatu where Melanesians were used as plantation laborers in Australia, Samoa and Fiji. The second is imperialism as a process of the subjugation of 'others'. This focuses on the ways in which indigenous peoples were exploited and dispossessed of their land, culture and human dignity in the quest for the appropriation of resources (ibid 22). The third is the enunciation of "imperialism as an idea or spirit with many forms of realization" (ibid21). This underscores the spirit of European Enlightenment which symbolized not only the economic, political and cultural transformation in Europe but the ways in which Europe becomes iconic of Enlightenment and "the development of the modern states, of science, of ideas, and of the 'modern' human person (ibid, 22). In essence this speaks, to the notion of European superiority which is expressed in complex forms including economic, political, cultural and military phenomena as opposed to the primitive native. The fourth constitutes imperialism as a discursive field of knowledge. Unlike the previous descriptions of imperialism, it is writers who actually experienced imperialism and colonialism either directly or indirectly, as well as others who seek to understand these processes from the local context, who produce this interpretation (ibid 23). Smith also notes that these dimensions of imperialism "do not necessarily contradict each other; rather they need to be seen as analyses which focus on different layers of imperialism" (ibid).

At the outset it is important to somewhat accentuate the theoretical and terminological distinctions between colonialism and imperialism, both of which had

often been used synonymously or treated as homogenous practices. This is not say, that colonialism is different. Rather it is to emphasize that colonialism is a unique manifestation of imperialism.

Smith distinguishes imperialism from colonialism. While the two terms are interlinked the latter Smith argues is a distinct form of the former. Colonialism, Smith argues involves the actual subjugation of the colonized through institutions imposed by the imperial power. According to Smith, imperialism is a system of control that secures market and capital investment while colonialism facilitates the imperial outreach through the establishment of institutions to ensure European control and domination (1999:21). Hence the colonial space constitutes what Smith refers to as “imperialism’s outpost, the fort and port of imperial outreach” (ibid, 22).

Robert Young also draws the distinction between imperialism and colonialism. According to Young they each constitute two distinct forms of empires. The former, argues Young is an empire or structure that is ideologically and financially driven and which is bureaucratically controlled from the center while the latter is developed by particular community for settlement purposes or by a trading company for the extraction of resources (2001: 16-17; 27-28). Imperialism, Young argues, focuses on the expansion of state power or “the grandiose projects of power” either through direct military conquest or through political, religious and economic influence. The administration of such state power encompasses territories which is either geographically coherent (such as the Chinese, the Moors and the Roman Empires) or incoherent (such as the British Empire). On the other hand, colonialism is pragmatic which entails the activity in the periphery.

This involves the imposition of the colonial state and institutions and the direct subjugation of those indigenous to the land as well as the systematic exploitation and expropriation of resources both natural and human. In retrospect imperialism entails not only the idea of territorial expansion, but also the conceptual framework of understanding territorial expansion and aggression of state power. Colonialism on the other hand can be analyzed as a practice or “the activity in the periphery” (Young 2001:16-17). Smith and Young’s discussions of imperialism and colonialism draw interesting similarities. Their views on imperialism converge on the idea of territorial expansion driven essentially by European economic agenda. In addition, Smith and Young’s notion of imperialism involves the subjugation and dispossession of indigenous peoples as well as the expropriation of resources.

Further, they both agree that imperialism constitutes an idea or conceptual analyses of the ways in which European hegemony is entrenched in the colonies and the colonized. Young sees imperialism as a conceptual analysis in the expansion of state power from the metropolitan center and its exertion upon the peripheries. Similarly, for Smith, it is the ways in which European hegemony is deployed through economic, political and military institutions of the West. It is also, Smith argues, the ways in which such hegemony is entrenched through multiple expressions- culturally, intellectually and technologically. This view of imperialism locates Europe as the icon of Enlightenment and “an integral part of the development of the modern state, of science, of ideas and of the ‘modern’ human person” (Smith 1999:22).

Smith and Young's analyses of colonialism are also similar. Colonialism according to both entails the establishment of imperial outpost. Smith refers to this as "the fort and port of imperial outreach" while Young articulates it as the "activity in the periphery" (1999: 23; 2001:16-17).

Also, they both agree that colonialism entails the subjugation and denigration of the colonized. Smith argues that the colonial space is important not only for economic reasons, but it also serves as cultural sites that preserve and perpetuate a superior image of the West - culturally, politically, economically and militarily. As such the colonial site constitutes multiple sites that serve to institutionalize and entrench the superiority of the West, while denigrating the colonized or the indigenous population and all that is represents.

Similarly, for Young colonialism involves the subjugation of the colonized through the imposition of the colonial apparatus of exploitation, expropriation and dispossession. Colonialism therefore is not only the "the fort and port of imperial outreach" or the "activity in the periphery" but more importantly it is a place and space of political and economic subjugation, exploitation and dispossession.

The Multiple Layers of Colonialism

Colonialism is multilayered and complex. This section focuses on the multiple and complex ways in which colonialism manifest itself in the colonies as well as its multiple effects on the colonized. Nicholas Thomas in his *Colonialism's Culture* argues that the colonial culture is a multifaceted phenomenon, or one that entails a "multiplicity of

colonizing projects” which involves the cultural, political and economic components, as opposed to the totalizing and homogenizing depiction of colonialism and imperialism articulated by Homi Bhabha, Gayatri Spivak and others, in colonial discourse analysis (1994:195). Colonialism, Thomas argues, is a fractured project that is shaped not only by the agenda of the colonial powers and their own internal squabbling, but also by the local context, and indigenous resistance against colonial hegemony. Thomas maintains that despite its global reach, colonialism does not have a global culture (ibid 66). As such the colonized, or indigenous peoples’ experience of colonization varies from society to society and is therefore complex.

Colonialism is not a unitary project but a fractured one, riddled with contradictions and exhausted as much by its internal debates as by the resistance of the colonized (ibid 51). Any analysis on the impacts of colonialism should therefore, be contextualized within the time and space where it occurs and its different trajectories, taking into account the diversity of indigenous peoples’ resistance, against colonial encroachment. This study examines the different layers or multiple projects of colonialism with reference to oppression, exploitation, and land dispossession and then to relate it to the case of British colonialism in Fiji, with specific reference to *iTaukei*.

Colonialism: A Project of Land Dispossession

Young argues that colonies were established for different purposes that serve to accommodate the economic and the geo-political imperatives of the colonial powers (2001: 17). This includes colonies that were appropriated predominantly for settlement

purposes or settlement colonies such as British North America, Australia, New Zealand or French Algeria. Another such purpose was purely for economic exploitation without any significant settlement and this include American Philippines and Puerto Rico, British India, Dutch East Indies, French India and New Caledonia (there were settlements in Kanaky as well, albeit penal colony), German Congo as well as Japanese Taiwan. The third involves colonies that were taken for its geo-strategic locations, or what Jurgen Osterhammel calls, the maritime enclaves, for purposes of global military and naval operations such as American Guantanamo and its naval bases in Cuba, Guam, Hawaii, British Gibraltar, Hong Kong, Malta and Singapore, Dutch Batavia, French/British Mauritius and Portuguese Malacca.

However regardless of the different categories of colonies or the different reasons as to why colonies were appropriated, colonialism often involves the dispossession of indigenous peoples of their land. As such, colonialism is first and foremost, a project of land dispossession. Edward Said, observes that the appropriation of land and space meant that colonialism was fundamentally an act of geographical violence perpetrated against indigenous people and their land rights (1993: 7). The nature of land dispossession under colonial occupation occurred in different forms. This includes land purchase, contracts or treaties, land seizure, land tenure reforms and institutional leasing arrangements.

In the case of Australia for instance, the British government considered the Aboriginal land as *terra nullius* or unowned (Banner 2007: 2-3; Russell 2005:40). *Terra nullius* the idea that Australia was effectively unoccupied prior to British colonization

and therefore land was available for the taking (ibid). *Terra Nullius* was also justified by the fact that since Aborigines had no organized system of cultivation, they therefore, do not have indigenous system of land ownership (Banner 22: 2007). This view was legitimized by Swiss Philosopher Emerich de Vattel who argued in his *Law of Nations* that , land is basically available for the taking, in an enormous continent with a tiny population (ibid 17). Vattel whose book was published in French in 1758 and translated into English in 1760 became instrumental in the institutionalization of terra nullius in Australia. In subscribing to this view British politician John Arthur Roebuck stated that colonies such as Australia are empty spaces. Even Lawyers in England and throughout Europe argue that settlers had the legal right to occupy uninhabited land (ibid16). Others such as Richard Windeyer a barrister argued Aborigines are only inhabitants of the land, but not proprietors of the land (ibid 39).

Australia was initially established in 1788 at Port Jackson as a penal colony (Russell 2005: 700). Since then large numbers of British convicts arrived in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Over 165, 000 convicts were sent to Australia with a period of eighty years (ibid). British settlers arrived in large numbers between 1851 and 1871 during the gold rush and by 1871 a total of 1.7 million British had settled in Australia. Throughout this period land was forcefully acquired either for individual purpose or in the name of the British crown. Following the arrival of the first load of settlers, the British government claimed the entire continent of Australia including the island of Van Diemen's Land or Tasmania (ibid 74). Aboriginal resistance against British invasion and the seizure of their land was met by martial law, imprisonment and violence. It is estimated that over 20,000

Aboriginals were killed in defending their country (ibid). To avoid future land wars, the Arnhem Land Aboriginal Reserve was created in 1934 within which Aborigines were settled.

In New Zealand, the dispossession of Maoris of their land was the result of both land purchase and treaty vis-à-vis the 1840 Treaty of Waitangi (Consedine and Consedine 2001:82-84; Stenson 2004: 66-80). Unlike Australia, land in New Zealand was alienated through land sales, although there were also instances of land seizure in the form of confiscation with the seizure of Waikato as a notable example. The Waitangi Treaty established a system of private property rights for land with the Crown overseeing land sale (Stenson 2004:68)). According to the treaty, Maoris could sell their land only to the British colonial government. Prior to the treaty though, individual white settlers bought land directly from Maori tribes. In other instances, private companies such as the New Zealand Company bought land and sold it to white settlers (Banner 2007: 63). Since land was owned tribally land deals were negotiated between colonial government and Maori chiefs following the Treaty of Waitangi. The Treaty of Waitangi therefore institutionalized the sale of land. The legalization of land sale through the Treaty of Waitangi was indicative of British's recognition of Maori's property rights to land, as opposed to the Aborigines of Australia.

However, after Maori refused to further the sale of the land, the British colonial government orchestrated a dubious land purchasing scheme (ibid 92). Under this scheme land was sold by individual chiefs without the consent of the tribe and in some instances land was purchased from the wrong people. This eventually led to tribal warfare and war

between Maoris and British settlers which resulted in the confiscation of land by the British colonial government. After two decades of formal British rule, much of the land in New Zealand was transferred from Maori to British ownership (ibid).

The Hawaiian Islands have also had a troubled history of land dispossession. The case of Hawaii falls under what Jurgen Osterhammel calls the maritime enclave, the third category of colonialism, in terms of the forms of colonialism as discussed by Young (Young 2001: 17). Prior to the overthrow of the Hawaiian Kingdom in 1893, the pressure of capitalism vis-à-vis private property rights compelled King Kamehameha III to enact a series of law collectively called the Mahele (division or partitioning) which transformed the traditional land tenure system of the Kanaka Maoli from communal use to private ownership (Kame'eleihiwa 1992:3).

The Mahele led to the division of the Hawaiian land into four categories, namely crown lands, designated for the King and his heir; government's land, to be used for the purpose and revenue for the Kingdom; konohiki lands awarded to ali'i (chiefs) and konihiki (land managers); and the kuleana lands (small parcels) awarded to the maka'ainana (commoners). The division of land under the Mahele eventually led to the loss of ultimate control of the aina (land) by the Ali'i Nui. This according to Lilikala Kame'eleihiwa marked the real loss of Hawaiian sovereignty (ibid 15). The Mahele ultimately led to the alienation of the kanaka maoli from their land as plantation owners, essentially foreigners, systematically absorbed small landholdings of the maka'ainana into conglomerate plantation entities (ibid 16). Consequently, the Kanaka Maoli are strangers in their own land, economically and politically marginalized as the United

States increasingly exert economic control through tourism, real estate speculation and militarization.

In the Marshall Islands, the island of Kwajalein was seized by the United States and transformed into a military base after the latter captured the islands from the Japanese in 1944 during the WWII (Johnson 1984:43). As a result, the Marshallese people in Kwajalein were forcefully relocated to other atolls such as Namu and nearby islets such as Ebeye by the US army to clear the islands for the American weapon testing and other military activities (ibid). The Marshall Islands subsequently became a United State Trust Territory together with Palau and the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) under the United Nation Mandate in 1947 (Ibid 6).

While the Marshall Islands was granted political independence in 1986 under the Compact of Free Association, Kwajalein continued to be used as a US military base for antiballistic missile testing, through a leasing arrangement between the US and Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI). The Marshallese of Kwajalein had been forced to live in a limited space under deprived condition as their Islands are taken over not only military testing but also for US military personnel and their families (ibid 35). Ebeye the most populated atolls of Kwajalein atoll had been called the 'slump of the Pacific' (ibid 36). An atoll of eighty acres with 15000 people, Marshallese in Ebeye continue to live under impoverished condition with substandard housing, scarce safe drinking water, failed school system, poor sanitation and hygiene as oppose to the affluent and relatively luxuriously subsidized lifestyle of the 1500 US military personnel and their families (ibid 37). The lease payment provided by the US government had been too inadequate to

compensate the relocation of Marshallese let alone the impoverished living condition of Marshallese in Ebeye (ibid). Like Fiji, bulk of the lease money is appropriated by Marshallese Iroj/Lerog, male and female chiefs respectively. It can be argued that in case the Marshall Islands, the Marshallese of the Kwajalein were alienated from their land through a perpetual leasing arrangement with the U.S. government.

In New Caledonia, land was also alienated, as a result of French colonization. According to John Connell, the history of New Caledonia was a history of land tenure (1987: 42). The French annexed New Caledonia in 1853 after a French landing party at Balade was attacked in 1851 by the natives and massacred with the exception of a single member (Connell 1987:36). More importantly, the French, apart from making its presence felt amidst the superiority of British naval power in the South Pacific, considered New Caledonia as potential penal colony (Connell 1987: 37). At the outset, the French government only recognized customary land rights on occupied lands while unoccupied lands were considered the property of the state (Saussol 1987:244). The French colonial government also reserved for itself the exclusive rights to purchase occupied land. However, the land decree of 1868 gave the colonial government the right to expropriate land, whether vacant or occupied, for public purposes without necessarily (ibid 245 – 246). This meant that the seizure of land on villages and cultivations sites were at the mercy of the French colonial authority (ibid).

On April 10, 1955 the French colonial authority ruled that one tenth of the rural land was to be reserved exclusively for the Kanaks while the remainder was to be opened

to concession (ibid 244). The European concept of land tenure was, therefore imposed, following annexation.

Land was initially alienated, in terms of use rights, to missionaries on Loyalty Islands and Catholic missionaries on the north east of Grande Terre (Lal and Fortune 2000:225). There were also instances of land alienation through land purchase especially by sandalwood traders (Crocombe 1968:25). James Paddon, a sandalwood trader purchased large track of land in 1854 where he established the first cattle farming in New Caledonia (Lal and Fortune 2000:225, Connell 1987:40). The French colonial authority also allowed private land companies to purchase land. Most notably, the Byrne and Brown Company which purchased 40, 000 hectares of land between Canala and St. Vincent (Connell 1987: 45; Saussol 1987: 244). Alienation of land also took place around military forts prior to 1858.

Large tracks of land were alienated through land concessions when serious settlement began in 1858. Land concessions were given to investors, mainly for cattle farming, which ranged from 1000 to 4000 acres in the south-east plains around Noumea (Connell 1987: 40 – 45, Lal and Fortune 225: 2000). Cattle farming were prevalent in New Caledonia between from 1859 to 1878. It was estimated that by 1878, there were more cattle heads in New Caledonia than the Kanaky population.

Later in 1862, the French colonial government switched to granting small holdings consisting of dozens of hectares through lease, with right to purchase, if investors met development conditions (ibid). The arrival of convicts in 1864 accelerated the process of land alienation in New Caledonia. Like free settlers' convicts were also given land

concessions for the cultivation of coffee (Connell 1987: 47). By 1922 a total of 22,000 convicts settled in Nou Island and other sites along the south-west coast (Connell 1987: 49).

The discovery of rich minerals in the 1870s and 1880's fundamentally change the nature of land use in New Caledonia. Investors and free settlers became increasingly interested in nickel mining on large land concessions in the mountain chains, instead of farming (Lal and Fortune 2000: 225). By 1893 a total of 240,000 hectares of freeholds and 53,000 hectares of leaseholds were granted. In addition, substantial tracks of land were alienated a for the establishment of military forts around the islands.

In Noumea large tracks of land were acquired forcefully for the establishment of residential lots for military personnel and colonial state bureaucrats (Connell 1987: 54). Like the Maoris, the Kanaks also lost their land through confiscation as the result of belligerence against colonial authority. For instance when Dame the chief of Yate refused to carry out the orders given to him, the French colonial regime seized all the land over which he was chief (Connell 1987: 44). Land was also confiscated in Boulapari and La Foa after Atai, a traditional high chief led his people in a revolt against the French colonial authority as the result of land alienation. The revolt which took place in 1878 was the bloodiest battle in the history of colonialism in New Caledonia.

The French colonial regime responded with military reprisal resulting in the death of 1000 natives and 200 Europeans (Connell 1987: 246, Lal and Fortune 2000: 225).

Indigenous lands are appropriated at the expense of indigenous peoples. They were ignored and excluded from the economic production of modern economy and left

economically disempowered in reserves and fringes of the modern economy, and excluded from the envisioning of the future in the colonial and post- colonial spaces. According to Jewish historian Ilan Pappé, such colonialists' project completely ignored the interests and the human dignity of indigenous populations (2008:616-617).

Pappé states that indigenous people were marginal in the re-conceptualization or the re-imagining of the colonial state following the acquisition of the land; neither were they considered in the envisioning of the economic and political future of the colonies. Indigenous peoples were therefore invisible in the colonial spaces.

In articulating the predicament of the Palestinians in the light of their dispossession by the Israelis, Pappé said the following which applies equally to all indigenous people elsewhere:

Always lurking, of course, was the issue of the fate of the local population, once the land had been successfully obtained. At the outset this was not supposed to be a question of great significance. Seen from the perspective of the initial impulse of to settle in Palestine, the missionaries and the Zionists regarded the native population as marginal. The locals were hardly there in the early vision of the future.....(ibid 616).

The dispossession of indigenous people of their land is perhaps the most fundamental impact of colonization which has had far reaching impact on indigenous societies around the world. This ranges from the near extinction to loss of indigeneity, from displacement to economic and political marginalization, from stateless to second class citizenship, from all forms of deprivations to all forms violations, from possessing authentic identities to the acquisition of negotiated cultural identities that are distorted, fractured and injured (Bhabha 1994: 132).

Colonialism: A Project of Oppression

Colonialism was also a project of colonial oppression. Karl Marx critiques colonialism as oppressive practices entailing a history of conquest, economic plunder. His anti-colonial position was based on details of atrocities committed by Europeans on Africans, Indians and other colonized peoples, drawn from William Howitt's *Colonization and Christianity* (1838) (Young 2003: 102-1003). This include the exploitation and atrocities committed by the Spaniards in the West Indies, Cuba, Mexico, Peru and Paraguay; the Portuguese in Brazil; the British in North America, India, South Africa, New Holland and the Pacific; and the French in their colonies. Marx analysis of colonialism was devoted to Wakefield's *A View of the Art of Colonization* in which he discusses colonialism essentially in relation to the historical development of the global capitalist economic system in British colonies such as Ireland, India and China. This is articulated in *The Communist Manifestos* (1848) in which both Marx and Engels discussed the development of global capitalism through colonialism (ibid).

Colonial expansion, Marx argues, provided the catalyst for the development of capitalism on a global scale supported by the bourgeois in their quest to revolutionize the instruments of production (ibid 104-105). Hence the search for raw materials, cheap labor and markets. According to Marx the exploitation of resources in the colonies and the atrocities committed against indigenous populations reveals what he calls the "truth about capitalism" – that is unveiling of the exploitative characteristics of capitalism in the colonies as opposed to the ways in which it functions in the home countries of the colonizer- Europe. "The profound hypocrisy and inherent barbarism of bourgeois

civilization lies unveiled before our eyes, turning from its home, where it assumes respectable forms, to the colonies, where it goes naked" (quoted in Young, 2003:101).

In the same vein, Cesaire highlights the absurdities of the civilization mission of enlightening the "savages, "the "uncultured" or the "primitive" that Europeans uses to justify colonialism. Cesaire asserts that colonialism is neither evangelization, nor a philanthropic enterprise, nor enlightenment; rather colonialism was fundamentally Europe's quest to extend to a global scale what he calls "the competition of its antagonistic economies" which thrives through the oppression of the colonized (1972: 10-11). The colonial encroachment was predicated fundamentally on the power of superior arms, military organization, political power, and economic wealth of the colonizers (Dirks 1992:3). Further, Colonialism was also a project of violence perpetrated against indigenous people. In his *The Wretched of the Earth* (1963) Frantz Fanon asserts that colonialism was an institutionalized form of violence. In other words, colonialism was a military project created and perpetuated through the use of violence or the threat of violence. As such, colonial liberation or decolonization can only be achieved on the part of the colonized, through the use of force (Fanon 1963:37).

Michael Taussig labels the colonies as a space of death where torture is endemic and the culture of terror reigns (Dirks 1992: 135). In his article on the "Culture of Terror" in Robert Dirks' *Colonialism and Culture* (1992), Taussig uses Roger Casement's account to accentuate the extent of torture perpetrated against the Putumayo Indians in the rubber extraction in Peru.

Casement was a British consul commissioned by the British government in 1906 to investigate allegations of atrocities committed against Putumayo Indians by a British registered company, the Peruvian- Amazon Co. (ibid, Young 2003:1). In his account, the Putumayo Report, Casement detailed the nature of brutality and torture done to the Putumayo Indians.

They worked night and day collecting rubber without the slightest remuneration and. They are given nothing to eat and wear. Their crops, together with the women and children, are taken for pleasure of the whites. They are inhumanly flogged until their bones are visible. Given no medical treatment, they left to die after torture, eaten by the company dogs. They are castrated, and their ears, fingers, arms and legs are cut off. They are also tortured by means of fire and crucifixion head- down. The whites cut them to pieces with machetes and dash out the brains of small children by hurling against the walls. The elderly are killed when they can no longer work. To amuse themselves, company officials practice shooting, using Indians as targets. . . douse them in kerosene and set them on fire to enjoy their agony (quoted in Dirks 1992: 143-144).

At the outset, Casement described the Putumayo Indians as peaceful, highly developed and morally speaking than their white oppressors who existed under an economic system of reciprocity. These peaceful Indians became victims of brutality and terror while their natural habitat became a space of death. Such space deprived the Indians of their culture and identity, their economic system, their sense of being and harmony with nature and their sense of dignity. The space of death became a space of transformation from dignity to denigration, from life to death, and from perpetuity to extinction. While Taussig talks specifically about the Putumayo Indians in Peru, his notion of the space of death epitomizes the colonial spaces elsewhere.

The Africans in the Congo Free State for instance were subjected to similar torture under the King Leopold II of Belgium who exploited the territory for its natural resources mostly rubber. In the process the Africans were hunted, chained up like wild beast, flogged, tortured and murdered while their children were dragged away into slavery (Young 2001: 1). Aime Cesaire describes the colonial space in this way: "I look around and wherever there are colonizers and colonized face to face, I see force, brutality, cruelty sadism conflict ..." (Cesaire 1972:21).

As such the space of death was where the torturers and the tortured intersect, the victimizers and the victims meet and where the colonizer and the colonized bonded into a culture of the conqueror and that of the conquered. It is a space where Indians, Africans, Aborigines, Maori, Kanaka Maoli, and other colonized peoples gave birth to the New World. It is a space where both advancement and extinction occur simultaneously. It was in this space that the colonizer secured the basis of its economic advancement and affluence while the colonized faced its deprivation, evisceration and extinction.

Colonialism: A Project of Racial Denigration

Further, colonialism also constitutes a project of cultural superiority and the denigration of the colonized. Cesaire claims that the colonial enterprise was based on the notion of the racial superiority of the white men and contempt for non-whites – in particular, the black skinned (ibid). In *the Colonizer and the Colonized* (1965) Albert Memmi articulates his theory of colonialism as the imposition of the colonizers' culture upon the colonized without any regard to the latter's culture (Memmi 1965:9).

Such imposition was often accompanied by the entrenchment of western style government, education and socio-economic system which function not only to condition the colonized to acquiesce to the illegitimate action of the colonizer but also to facilitate the privileging of the colonizer. The colonizer therefore becomes an illegitimately privileged usurper at the detriment of those indigenous to the land.

A foreigner, having come to a land by the accidents of history, he has succeeded not merely in creating a place for himself but also in taking away that of the inhabitants, granting himself astounding privileges to the detriment of those rightfully entitled to them.....He is a privileged being and an illegitimately privileged one; that is, a usurper (ibid).

The colonial space, according to Memmi inevitably privileges every Europeans. This includes those who seek to perpetuate the oppression of the colonized and those who, in principle, reject the economic, political, and moral scandal of colonization, and either leaves the colony or stay on, with the intention of changing the colonial relationship. The only difference is that the former is the colonizer who accepts, and the latter is the colonizer who rejects.

The one who rejects colonization is still essentially a colonizer himself because despite his principle disavowal of colonization he however participates in a socio-political and economic system that inevitably privileges him. Hence, the European cannot and will never be a colonial; that is a European who lives in the colony and refuses to participate in the oppression of the colonized. The colonial space inevitably turns the European into a colonizer that is, an imposer, usurper and oppressor.

The colonial does not exist, because it is not up to the European in the colonies to remain a colonial even if he had so intended. Whether he expressly wishes it or

not, he is received as a privileged person by the institutions, customs and people. From the time he lands or is born, he finds himself in a factual position which turns him into a colonizer (ibid 17).

As such, the colonizer is privileged at the expense of the colonized. For every privilege the colonizer has, one has been usurped from the colonized. The colonized suffers deprivations in his native soil in order, for the colonized to be privileged.

If his living standards are high, it is because those of the colonized are low; if he benefit from plentiful and undemanding labor and servants, it is because the colonized can be exploited at will and are not protected by the laws of the colony; if he can easily obtain administrative positions, it is because they are reserved for him and the colonized are excluded from them; the more freely he breathes, the more the colonized are choked. (1965: 8).

According to Memmi the colonial place is a space of denigration for the colonized where he is perpetually inferior, unintelligible, primitive and alienated in his own land. Memmi argues that it is essential for the colonized to believe that they are less or, at the very least, be constantly reminded of it in order for the colonizer to benefit from the exploitation of the colonized and their land. On the other hand, it is imperative for the colonizer to be exalted as the savior of the human race, and the epitome of progression in order to legitimize the exploitation. It is essential that the colonized remain distant in appearance and culture in order for the colonized to continue on in their charade of supremacy domination. The colonizers are there for economic gain and they must convince themselves that the colonized are less than they are in every way, in order to justify their exploitation. This is what Memmi refers to as the mythical portraits of the colonizer and the colonized.

Nothing could better justify the colonizer's privileged position than his industry, and nothing could better justify the colonized's destitution than his indolence. The mythical portrait of the colonized therefore includes an unbelievable laziness and that of the colonizer, a virtuous taste for action (ibid 79).

In the final analysis, the colony which inevitably privileges the colonizer is the same space where the colonized is subjugated, usurped of his land and resources, deprived of his essence and perpetually oppressed. Such is the inevitable dialectical relationship of the colonizer and colonized in the colonial space.

Frantz Fanon, the Martinican psychologist makes compelling arguments on the psychological and physiological impacts of colonialism on the colonized. Fanon's analysis is based on his own personal experience. As an educated black man in the French colonial world he conceived of himself as French, or as a white- man.

He assumes that he would be embraced into the white men's league given his exposure to western education, his intellectual achievement and his cultural integration into the colonizers world. Fanon however, became disillusioned after he continues to experience French racism (Fanon 1967:12).

While Fanon acknowledges the economic, political, cultural and educational deprivation of colonialism he focuses primarily on its psychological impact on the colonized (1967:10). In the *Black Skin White Mask*, (1967) Fanon elaborates the ways in which the colonizer and colonized relationship is normalized and how such relationship created a mental bondage and deep inferiority complex on the colonized (ibid 11). The white men's perpetual contempt for the black men is pervasive and the racial divide between the two is clearly demarcated and irreconcilable. This is often referred to as

Fanon's Manichean perspective – the perpetual conflict between the white and black men. Fanon articulates the ways in which racism is a form of psychological violence against the colonized. He argues that racism generates harmful psychological constructs that blind the black men to his subjection in universalized white culture, and also alienate his consciousness.

There is a fact: White men consider themselves superior to black men. There is another fact: Black men want to prove to white men, at all costs, the richness of their thought, the equal value of their intellect ... For the black man there is only one destiny. And it is white ... The analysis I am undertaking is psychological... It is apparent to me that the effect dis-alienation of the black man entails an immediate recognition of social and economic realities. If there is an inferiority complex it is the outcome of a double process: Primarily, economic; subsequently, the internalization ... of this inferiority (ibid 10-11).

Fanon illustrates how the imposition of the colonizer's language is one of the fundamental causes of the inferiority complex on the colonized. The colonizer's language is privileged at the expense of the colonized. The latter is therefore conditioned to embrace the colonizer's language because it is the language of civilization, power and progression towards whiteness.

French as the language of the colonizer is the language of human existence and its mastery by the Negro of the Antilles is indicative of his progression to real human being – or towards whiteness.

The Negro of the Antilles will be proportionately whiter – that is he will come closer to being a real human being – in direct ratio to his mastery of the French language.... A man who has a language consequently possesses the world expressed and implied by that language...Mastery of language affords remarkable power (ibid 18).

Fanon talks about how the Antilles of Martinique were conditioned to despise their own Creole while teachers keep a close watch on children not speak Creole. School children were taught to scorn their own dialect. The Antilles middle class speak Creole only when speaking to their servants (ibid 20). Creole therefore is denigrated and is associated with savageness, blackness, barbarism and sub- human. The colonized or the black man therefore developed self -contempt for his own language and culture creating deep inferiority complex. When the colonized speak the language of the colonizer, they somewhat acquiesce to, and embrace the institutionalization of white men's culture. "For it is implicit that to speak is to exist absolutely for the other ... To speak ... means above all to assume a culture, to support the weight of civilization" (ibid 17). As such, to speak in French means that one accepts or is coerced into accepting, the collective consciousness of the French, which identifies blackness with evil and sin. This creates a deep sense of inadequacy on the black man -the colonized. In an attempt, to disassociate himself from blackness the black man is alienated from himself.

Language therefore is a tool used by the colonizer to entrench its hegemonic culture and the perpetuation of the colonized subjugation, oppression and exploitation. Furthermore, the inferiority complex of the colonized or the black man also emanates from the impossibility to resemble the identity of the colonizer or to become white. When the black man is drained of his essence (that is of his language and culture) he assumes a new identity. However, his new identity is neither authentically indigenous nor resembling the identity of the colonizer or the white men. The black man will never be white.

Conclusion

Colonialism has fundamentally changed the world economically, politically, religiously and culturally. The global economic system for instance is dominated and controlled by the West, as the result of colonization and such dominance has given the West the ability to globally entrench its political, cultural and religious ideologies. Furthermore, the economic, political, religious and cultural configuration of the post-colonial world is a colonial construct that functions in opposition against the interests of the former colonized and indigenous peoples. As such, the post-colonial space is featured with all forms of deprivations and impoverishment. Given its oppressive and coercive nature, the former colonized and indigenous peoples alike have suffered from the dispossession of their land, economic exclusion and marginalization, political disempowerment, oppression, exploitation, slavery, self-denigration, fractured identities, cultural extinction, forced migration and unnumbered deaths. The colonial space is not only oppressive, exploitative and disempowering but it is also as Dirks describes it a “space of death.” Therefore, any attempt to understand the marginalization of indigenous peoples in the post-colonial space should be predicated on the post-colonial theory or the critical theories of colonial discourse.

CHAPTER THREE

THE VANUA AND ITAUKEI LAND TRUST BOARD (TLTB)

Introduction

The methods by which Fijian society was catalogued into a series of pyramidal structures of unambiguously inter-related social units were, of necessity, procrustean (France 1969: 167).

The concept of the *Vanua* is both complex and critical in understanding the *iTaukei* society (Halapua 2003:81; Madraiwiwi 2008:20; Ratuva 2002:2; Ravuvu 1983:70). *Vanua* encompasses not only the *qele* (soil) or the geographical territorial space, but it also embraces the socio-political, epistemological, ontological, and indigenous culture of the indigenous people of Fiji or the *I-Taukei*. This includes *qele*, (soil), the *veiliutaki vakaturaga* (chiefly leadership), the *i valavala kei na i tovo vakavanua* (culture), *na vosa ni vanua* (language and dialects), the *veiwekani vakadra* (kinship, social relationships and human resources), the *kalou vu* (spiritual ancestors), the *wasawasa* (the ocean), the *yau bula* (mineral resources), and the *i qoliqoli* (fishing grounds). Thus the concept of the *Vanua* is intricate which provides the basis of culture, indigeneity, identity, sense of belonging, as well as the basis of self- conceptualization. But the concept of the *Vanua* or rather its institutionalization is a colonial construct. The dissertation contends that the *Vanua* is a colonial project of political oppression and social cohesion for the purpose of systematic economic exploitation. Further, the *Vanua* is a critical component of a broader colonial project of land dispossession and economic marginalization.

The creation of the *Vanua* subsequently allowed the British colonial government to establish an institutional trusteeship –the *iTaukei* Land Trust Board (ILTB) that

became responsible for the containment of the *iTaukei* within the most inaccessible part of the native land –the native reserve- for subsistent agriculture, while leasing the best arable land to non-*iTaukei* and private corporations for the economic development. This constitutes the *iTaukei*'s alienation of land through an institutional leasing arrangement. As such, the dissertation critically examines the reconstruction of *i-Taukei* society vis-à-vis the *Vanua* arrangement and the institutional role of the ILTB. The *iTaukei* society, at the point of the colonial encounter exhibited socio-political fragmentation and a variegated system of traditional land tenure (Lal, 1992: 15; Norton, 1990: 63; Sutherland 1992, 12). Such societal fragmentation presented major obstacle in the effective political subjugation of the natives and the ability of the colonial state to systematically access the native land for economic development. This necessitated the creation of a socio-political homogeneity – the *Vanua*.

The institutionalization of the *Vanua* entails three components. An elaborate discussion of these components will be dealt with later. But at the outset, the first entails the establishment of a socio-political homogeneity. This consists of a symmetrical system of social structure that organizes *iTaukei* into three hierarchical levels of social classifications, namely the *yavusa*, *mataqali* and *tokatoka*, under the overarching structure of the *Vanua*. The second element consists of the homogenization of the different systems of traditional land tenure into a standardized or uniformed system of land tenure.

The newly homogenized land tenure system became formalized as the “traditional” system of land tenure belonging to the *iTaukei*. This was achieved after a lengthy and complex process of land registration which was conducted by the Native

Land Commission (NLC). The newly homogenized system of traditional land tenure entails three principles which include the registration of the *mataqali* as the legal landholding unit, the institutionalization of the communal ownership of land, and finally, its inalienability (France 1969:113; 127). The third entails the institutionalization of eastern *iTaukei* chiefs as the guardians of the native populations, a role which provided them unprecedented powers within the *iTaukei* society. The *Vanua* structure consists of three layers of *iTaukei* chiefs namely, *Turaga iTaukei*, at the top, *Turaga ni Yavusa* and *Turaga ni Mataqali* in descending order. Chiefly rule under the *Vanua* structure was featured with political oppression and the economic exploitation.

The Vanua and ILTB: An Intertwined Colonial Projects

The creation of the *Vanua* and the establishment of the *iTaukei* Land Trust Board are colonial projects and are both compatible and intertwined. The former facilitated the establishment of the latter. After a homogenized system of “traditional” land tenure was established in 1939, the *iTaukei* Land Trust Board (ILTB) was instituted in 1940 to basically perform two tasks. The first is to determine an appropriate percentage of the native land for the future maintenance of the *iTaukei* and second being to lease native land primarily to Indo-Fijian farmers in sugarcane industry. This is where the homogenization of the land tenure system and the socio-political structure becomes strategically important. The homogenous entity is manageable and is easy to maneuver at the will of the colonial government. The homogenous system of “traditional” land tenure for instance makes it less difficult for the TLTB to administer the collective access of *iTaukei* to the native land.

As such, the TLTB, demarcated 35% of the native land, as native reserve, for exclusive use upon which the *iTaukei* are deployed as subsistence agriculturalists. Concomitantly, the ILTB systematically leased out the bulk of native land to non-*iTaukei* in the sugar industry and private corporations for economic development. Hence, the creation of a homogenized system of “traditional” land tenure was designed to limit the rights of access of the *iTaukei* to the native land in order to secure the bulk of the native land for economic development. The role of the ILTB perpetually confined the *iTaukei* within the native reserve as subsistent cultivators.

Consequently, the *iTaukei* are not only alienated from the best and the largest portion of arable land, but they are also alienated from the economic production on such land. The creation of uniformity both in social organization and the “traditional” system of land tenure as well as the establishment of the ILTB have fundamentally contributed to the economic marginalization of the *iTaukei*.

The dissertation, therefore, argues that the institutionalization of the *Vanua* and the TLTB constitute the colonial projects of oppression, land dispossession, exploitation and economic marginalization which masquerade itself under the notion of indigeneity, or what Durutalo refers to as “the preservation of the paramountcy of indigenous Fijian interests” (1986:31).

This chapter begins with a discussion on the socio-political fragmentation of the *I-Taukei* society in terms of social organization and the variations of indigenous system of land tenure prior to, and at the point of, colonial conquest. Also of importance is that, the chapter will highlight the importance of the enactment in 1880 of the Native Land

Ordinance (NLO) and the work of the Native Land Commission (NLC) in the institutionalization of homogeneity in the *iTaukei* society. The chapter will conclude by setting the context of the dissertation

Social Fragmentation and Kaleidoscopic System of Traditional Land Tenure

In his book *Fiji: Race and Politics in an Island State* 1991, William Sutherland argues that the presentation of Fiji's pre-colonial history entails two versions. The first constitutes what he calls the "idyllic, paternalistic portrayal" of the past, which includes a hierarchical structure of the Fijian society under the "noble" chiefly aristocratic rule. (1991:15). Such view, Sutherland argues, is propagated by the apologetics of the colonial government with the likes of G.K Roth and Deryck Scarr who advocated the unchanging nature of the *iTaukei* society "despite their exposure to alien influences" (ibid). The second constitutes the idea that the past was featured with social variations and intense conflicts. Further, what constitutes the present *I-Taukei* society is essentially a British colonial construct (ibid). The most notable of this view is Peter France who articulates his approach "as one of empirical skepticism after the manner of the Fijian chief who, when asked to explain the custom of his tribe in the matter of chiefly succession, replied that the custom was to fight about it" (ibid 15).

This dissertation subscribes to the latter view and is as follows. The fragmentation of the *iTaukei* society, both in terms of its social organization and traditional system of land tenure, have been accentuated by authors such as France 1969, Howard 1991, Lloyd 1982, Lal 1992, Norton 1990, Ratuva 2002, and Sutherland 1992. These authors have

elucidated the heterogeneity of the *iTaukei* society by juxtaposing the egalitarianism of the Hill Tribes of the interior of Viti Levu, which includes Naitasiri, Ra, Magodro and Nadroga-Navosa, with that of the hierarchical societies of the coastal west of Viti Levu such as Nadroga and eastern Fiji, most notably Bau, Lau, and Lomaiviti.

According to their accounts the egalitarian nature of the Hill Tribes of Fiji resembles those of Melanesian societies where the power of chiefs is not only limited but conditional, while the hierarchical nature of eastern Fiji, reflects that of Polynesian as the result of the close links to Tonga and Samoa (France 1969:4; Howard 1991:17; Norton 1977:63; Sutherland 1992:12).

In his analysis of David Wilkinson's report, France said the following: "So varied are the situations recorded in these reports that they might well describe three different countries and three different races" (1969: 134). Wilkinson was the first Commissioner of the Native Land Commission who was tasked with ascertaining the nature of social organization and traditional system of land tenure. France further argues that apart from the social variations, Fiji's pre-colonial past, was also featured with intense tribal conflicts. In his juxtaposition, Norton argues that the egalitarian nature of the Hill Tribes is reflected by the absence of chiefly customs and respectful greetings, as well as the absence of traditional protocol with regard to chief installation and presentation of first fruits as well as the absence of allegiance to chiefly authority, as opposed to the elaborate protocol associated with hierarchical society of the coastal west and eastern Fiji (1977:63).

These authors have also concurred that the socio-political stratification of the eastern Fiji was the result of Tongan and Samoa invasions of the islands. Howard, for

instance, argues that archeological evidence indicates that there was a large scale invasion of eastern Fiji by Tongans approximately one thousand years ago who accompanied by Samoans craftsmen (1991:17). Sutherland goes on to argue that apart from the introduction of socio-political stratification, the Tongans also introduced superior military skills and technology which resulted in the establishment of eastern power notably under the Tongan chief Ma'afu (1992:12).

According to Brij Lal, while there is lack of evidence to describe the nature of social heterogeneity, he maintains however, that Fiji's pre-colonial past was featured with social and political fragmentation (1992:4). Steven Ratuva argues that the adoption of the *Vanua* essentially provided a homogenous social organization within the *I-Taukei* society as opposed to socio-political fragmentation during the pre-colonial period (2002:2). This was made possible, Ratuva argues, through the demarcation of geographical boundaries and ordered social grouping which was engineered by the British colonial government.

Furthermore, the traditional system of land tenure was also complex. France argues that the existence of a variety of sub-cultures under the pre-colonial period makes it difficult to hypothesize a comprehensive and observed rule of a universal system of traditional land tenure (1969:14). According to France, the British Colonial Office, under the instruction of Lord Carnarvon, advised Sir Arthur Gordon-Fiji's first substantive Governor, to devise a system of land tenure that would embrace the *iTaukei*'s customary rights to land (Ibid 110). As such Sir Arthur subsequently asked the Council of Chiefs which he created in 1875, to provide a clear statement on the traditional system of land tenure. Interestingly the *iTaukei* leading chiefs, according to France, could not agree on a

traditional system of land tenure that embraces the whole of Fiji. They had different opinions on how land was owned. In fact, the chief of Bua admitted that his people are actually confused on the nature of traditional rights to land “which was the main reason why his people neglected to plant coconuts and fruit trees (Ibid). As France observes:

The chiefs seem to have been not at all sure of the ‘immemorial traditions’ which governed the distribution and exercise of land rights in Fiji, and their early essays into formulating a definitive system for the whole group served to emphasize the variety of opinions held (ibid)

Also, chiefs held different opinions on the social unit that assumes land ownership (Ibid, 110). While some chiefs suggested that it was the *itokatoka* (extended family), others suggested the *mataqali* (a group of extended families). The chiefs themselves were unsure of the meaning of these social units. The chief of Bua for instance, indicated that there is no such thing as the *itokatoka* in his province, while the chief of Ba, queried the meaning of *itokatoka* amongst his fellow chiefs (Ibid 112). Be that as it may, chiefs eventually agreed in 1879 to formalize the *mataqali* as the “traditional” land owning unit.

The beginning and the end of the matter is this: we repeat, and with one voice solemnly declare the true and real ownership of land with us is vested in the *mataqali* alone, nor is it possible or lawful for any *mataqali* to alienate its land (quoted in France, ibid 113).

The British colonial government subsequently institutionalized the *mataqali* as the “traditional” land owning unit under the 1880 Native Land Ordinance.

The Native Land Ordinance (NLO) and Evolutionary Anthropology

The Native Land Ordinance was enacted in 1880 to standardize the diverse indigenous systems of land tenure. The newly homogenized system of land tenure became the “traditional land tenure” of the *I-Taukei* “as derived from their ancestors and evidenced by tradition and usage shall be the legal tenure thereof...” (Quoted in France 1969:129). The NLO embraces three principles in establishing a standardized system of land tenure. This includes, firstly, the institutionalization of the *mataqali* as the legal landholding unit in accordance with Council of Chiefs’ resolution of 1879 (France 1969:113). The second principle, entails the institutionalization of the communal ownership of land (ibid, 127). This was preceded by work of Land Claims Commission which was tasked with authenticating the proper sales of native land to Europeans. The Native Land Commission was established under the Lands Claims Ordinance in 1879 to investigate European’s claims to land titles (Campbell 1989:160; France 1969:114-115; Lal 1992: 14). Land that was shown to have been sold fairly were confirmed as freehold and those that were adjudicated otherwise reverted back to native land. After its investigation, the Land Claims Commission approved the proper sales of 517 acres of land out of a total of 854 acres that were supposedly bought by Europeans (Donnerly et al, 1994:40).

The enactment of the NLO witnessed the institutionalization of the communal ownership of native land where 3.9 million acres or 83% of Fiji’s land was declared as customarily owned by the *I-Taukei*. The third principle constitutes the inalienability of land (ibid). This means that the collective ownership of native land is not only entrenched

in the hands of the *I-Taukei* but also, that such land, cannot be alienated either through sale or otherwise, except to the crown. The enactment of the Native Land Ordinance in 1880 was based on Gordon's philosophy, which at its core, the preservation of the *I-Taukei* society, against the corrupting influences of the planter community and the capitalistic economic system (Ibid: 107). Fundamental to this view point was the restrictions of the amount of land alienated to Europeans, and more importantly, the preservation of the indigenous ownership of land. Gordon believed that the preservation of the native land was critical in the preservation of the *I-Taukei* indigeneity. "All those who are acquainted with the Fijian race know perfectly well that if you separate them from their land the race will die out..."(quoted in Donnelly 1990, 40). As such, the enactment of the NLO embraces precisely Gordon's philosophy, which France describes as the orthodox traditional system of Fijian land tenure (France 1969:125). The NLO therefore became the basis of Gordon's native policy.

Gordon claims to be indispensable, having an intimate knowledge of the *I-Taukei's* customs and traditions that is far superior than those possessed by other European settlers (ibid, 103). He articulated his indispensability in the following way:

As great a danger as that which arises from a change of ministers at home is that which springs from the extreme improbability that my successor here will share my views, or even if does so, will have the same instinct which, by no merit of mine, I happen to possess for understanding natives, or the same absence of distaste for their society as equals (quoted in France, ibid).

But as France points out, Gordon's familiarity with the *i-Taukei* society was based on erroneous assumptions. At the outset, Gordon was "hampered by his ability to speak Fijian" (ibid 104). Secondly, in assuming the position of chiefs among chiefs/gentlemen among gentlemen, or the ceremonial head of the *I-Taukei* society he had alienated himself, France argues, from the opportunity to mingle with ordinary people and have a fuller understanding of the dynamics of the native society under his Governorship (ibid 107). Brij Lal also shares France's skepticism of Gordon. According to Lal, Gordon's personal beliefs of the *I-Taukei* society was exaggerated "with a misplaced sense of intimate acquaintance with Fijian language and society" (1999:15). More importantly, both France and Lal argue that Gordon's claims were not based on a careful observation of the *I-Taukei* society but on what Lal describes as the "linear theories of nineteenth-century evolutionary anthropology" (Lal 1999: 15). Gordon was influenced by Anthropologists Lorimer Fison and Lewis Morgan's notion of unilinear evolutionary theories. Fison who was an English missionary became a field worker for Morgan, (while he was in Fiji) and contributed to the publication of the *Ancient Society* in 1877.

Morgan in his book articulates seven stages or ethnical periods of human progression from 'savagery' at the bottom of scale to the 'state of civilization' at the top through what he calls "the slow accumulations of experimental knowledge" (1910:3). Fison while in Fiji, advocated the importance of Morgan's analyses and its particular relevance to the case of the *iTaukei*, with regard to its traditional system of land tenure. In his lecture at the Mechanic's Institute in Levuka, on April 15th 1880, Fison argued that the *iTaukei* at the time of European contact was appropriately categorized into the ethnical

epoch, referred to as the 'Middle Period of Barbarism' (France 1969:118). This is the second of the seven stages of social progression where land was not only owned communally but it was inalienable as well. In the *Ancient Society* Morgan describes the characteristics of such stage as follows:

The territorial domain still belonged to the tribe in common; but a portion was now set apart for the support of the government, another for religious uses, and another and more important portion, that from which the people derived their subsistence, was divided among the several gentes, or communities ... that any person owned lands or houses in his own right, with power to sell and convey in fee simple to whomsoever he pleased, is not only unestablished but improbable. Their mode of owning their lands in common...precluded the individual ownership of houses or of lands. A right to sell an interest in such lands ... and to transfer the same ... would break up their plan of life. The possessory right, which we must suppose existed in individuals or in families, was inalienable, except within the gens ... (Ibid: 545-546)

In the context of Morgan's analyses all the land in the *iTaukei* society was "traditionally owned by *mataqali* and that all land was, according to the immemorial customs of Fiji, inalienable" (France 1969: 117). As such, Gordon embraced these principles and incorporated them into the enactment of the 1880 Native Land Ordinance (NLO) (ibid 125).

However, the *iTaukei* society during Gordon's time did not reflect the characteristics of the 'Middle Period of Barbarism' that Morgan articulates. Land was not communally owned everywhere as Gordon decreed it to be, neither was the *mataqali* the proprietary unit of the *iTaukei's* land (France 1969:110-112; Lal 1999:15). In regions like Rewa and Yasawa for instance, land was owned individually, while in Tailevu and Bua it was owned by extended families or *tokatoka* and co-brotherhood respectively (France 1969: 134). Also, the *mataqali* as a social grouping was a foreign concept in Bua and Yasawa.

In the latter people were confused with their social groupings and were not able to distinguish *tokatoka* or extended families from *mataqali* or clan (. Further the principle of land inalienability stipulated under the NLO was contradictory to the customary practices of land alienation practiced widely by *iTaukei*. Land alienation occur during tribal warfare in which a conquered-tribes transfer land to the conquering tribes as token of retreat and allegiance. In Rewa for instance, there were ten different set of conditions in which land can be transferred. As such one can argue that the “traditional” land tenure system of the *iTaukei* was essentially a colonial construct.

The Native Land Commission (NLC) and the Creation of Homogeneity

The Native Land Commission (NLC) was established under the Native Land Ordinance (NLO) in 1880, to perform the task of land registration throughout Fiji. Its work included the marking and recording of traditional land boundaries, the registration of *mataqali* names, and the registration of every *iTaukei* to the ir respective *mataqali*. In essence, the function of the NLC was to standardize the land-owning unit to that of the *mataqali* to be in compliance with the stipulation of the NLO, namely, the institutionalization of the *mataqali* as the newly standardized landholding unit within the *iTaukei* society.

However, given the variation in the traditional systems of land tenure, the work of the Native Land Commission, was not only cumbersome and complex, but one that was tainted with suspicion, tribal squabbling and uncertainty on the part of the *iTaukei*. In fact, the process of land registration took more than three decades with a total of four

attempts, to ensure its successful completion. The first attempt of land registration was held in 1880 immediately following the enactment of the Native Land Ordinance (NLO) with the appointment of Walter S. Carew and David Wilkinson as land commissioners. However, very little was achieved after four years since the establishment of the NLC. The failure, according to the Commissioners, was due to the general resentment of the natives towards the NLO who claimed that since they cannot read nor write, any record of their land would be useless. In his report Wilkinson stated that the land registration process had generated suspicion amongst the *iTaukei* who viewed it as a means to confiscate and sell native land on the part of the British colonial government. Further the work was made difficult because of fraudulent claims to land as was the case in Naitasiri (Ibid 131).

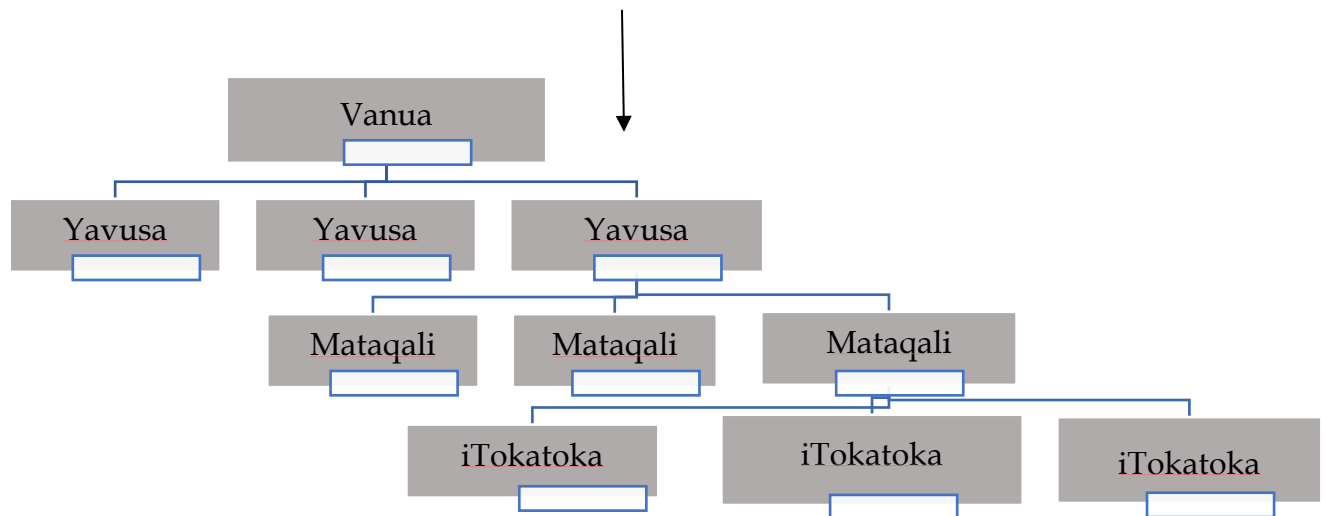
The second attempt took place in 1890 after a lapse of six years in which Basil Thompson was appointed as the new land commissioner. This attempt also failed because of the complex nature of land tenure practices of the natives.

Also, the land claimed by tribes was not located in one geographical area, but scattered throughout the country among the lands of other clans. In the plains of Ba, the natives were scattered into a widely separate community with no established customary rights to the land they were occupying. He found out that the people living the Ba plains were not the original owners of the land. Instead they were people of the interior hills of Ba who were displaced during tribal wars. As the result, these people moved and found settlement in the Ba plains. Hence it was difficult to established true ownership of the land.

The third attempt at registering the Fijian land occurred in 1894 with the re-appointment of David Wilkinson who was initially commissioned in 1880. Wilkinson's work did not fail, but rather it was stopped by Governor im Thurn in 1905 who viewed Gordon's native policies as economically detrimental to the natives. However, Wilkinson's findings provided important insights in the work of the Native Land Commission. Not only was the land tenure system varied, but as Thompson found out, the social-political structure of the *iTaukei* society was variegated as well. As such Thompson recommended that the Commission dealt with the issue of socio-political fragmentation before a standardized land tenure system was established to embody the customary rights of access on the part of the *iTaukei* that is to explore the various socio-political structures before it can identify traditional land boundaries. This, therefore necessitated the institutionalization of a particular social order within which land registration can be conducted.

The insight was embraced by G. V. Maxwell who was appointed in 1912 resumed the work of the Commission after a lapse of seven years. Maxwell's priority was to establish a social order that can be institutionalized within which the process of land registration can be conducted. After spending less than six months in Nadroga and the Colo (interior) of Viti Levu, Maxwell, claimed that he had established the exact nature of the Fijian social structure. The Fijian social order according to Maxwell was a pyramid with *itokatoka* (extended families) at the bottom, the *mataqali*, *yavusa* and *vanua* in ascending order as follows:

Fig 1
The Vanua Structure



(Source: France 1969:166)

According to Maxwell the social units were clearly delineated and their relationships to each other were definitively structured. The *Yavusa*, Maxwell argues, was the direct agnate descendants of the ancestral gods or the *kalou-vu*, whose sons later formed the *mataqali* and as the population increased the *i-tokatoka* were established, to accommodate the lowest order of the subdivision which also exercised rights to land (ibid 166). However, the *Vanua* structure was found only in Nadroga and despite its uniqueness, it was accepted and institutionalized as the 'traditional' social order as well as the basis of the "traditional" system land tenure system (Lloyd 1982: 82). The *Vanua* therefore became regarded as the orthodox of the *iTaukei* way of life and a cardinal feature of customary land tenure. Such enunciation put to rest the ambiguities of the early work

of the NLC and the obscurities associated with the *iTaukei* society. This enabled the NLC to focus its attention on the process of land registration, the recording of land boundaries belonging to each *mataqali* and its respective members.

In 1945 the NLC and its surveyors successfully completed the inventory of land boundaries with the exception of a small area of Namosi and some outlying islands and subsequently produced 90% of the topographic map coverage of the Fiji Islands (Dutt and Volavola, 1979: 33). The dawn of the post WWII era also marks the emergence of a re-constructed society of the *iTaukei*. Not only was a new social organization delineated and institutionalized, but a new system of land tenure was also defined and projected and “traditional”. The *Vanua* became the epitome of homogeneity within which *iTaukei* are deployed and projected as a socially- politically homogenized people in the post – colonial. The *Vanua* is projected (by the colonizers, beneficiary chiefly and commoner elites) as authentically indigenous, self –perpetuating and entrenched since time immemorial.

Contextualizing the Vanua and the ILTB within the Post-Colonial Discourse

The study seeks to contextualize the intertwined colonial projects of the *Vanua* and TLTB within the multiple dimensions, or the multi analyses of colonialism, in order to understand the economic marginalization of the *iTaukei*, in the light of British colonialism. While this discussion will be the subject of chapter 5, it is important to point out at the outset, that the study explores the extent to which, the institutionalization of the *Vanua*, and the creation of the ILTB, by the British colonial government, can be understood

within Said's concept of Orientalism. In this context of the colonial state functions as a corporate institution for dealing with, and having authority over, the Orient; or a western style of domination, control and restructuring of the Orient (Said 1978:3). Also, the study contextualizes British colonialism within Cesaire's notion of colonization, as a colonial activity, a colonial enterprise and colonial conquest, with specific regard to the *Vanua* and ILTB, as colonial institutions of domination and subordination – one that Cesaire argues is predicated and justified by contempt (1972:20). Further, and perhaps more importantly, the study frames the *Vanua* and ILTB within Cesaire's argument, that such institutions facilitated the establishment of capitalism and the institutional and ideological framework that legitimized the emergence of the ruling class, at the expense of ordinary *iTaukei*.

The ruling class in this context consists of *iTaukei* chiefly elites, colonial officials and white capitalists. In addition, the *Vanua* and the ILTB is contextualized within Nicholas Thomas' notion of multiple and fractured colonial projects. The *Vanua*, in this sense is seen as colonial projects of political oppression and disempowerment, while the ILTB as projects of dispossession, economic exploitation and exclusion.

A Critique of Maxwell's Assertion

Maxwell's assertion of the encompassing nature of the *Vanua* needs to be critically examined. At the outset, the experience of the previous Land Commissioners did accentuate the socio-political fragmentation of the native Fijian society. Maxwell was a man of contradiction. His own fieldwork account controverted his assertion. Maxwell

admitted that his inquiries were clouded by “reckless perjury of the many witnesses and the sullen secretiveness of others” (quoted in France, 1969: 167). Like his predecessors, Maxwell inquiries were equally resisted and ignored by native Fijians. In fact, after only six weeks in Nadroga, Maxwell gave up, and moved to the Colo (interior) of Viti Levu where responses were no different. Native Fijians’ reaction to the work of the NLC borders between non-cooperation and active obstruction. His report indicated that native Fijians were not only uncooperative, but they systematically lied to the inquiries of the Native Land Commission.

The conspiracies and perjuries which stand revealed from time to time are simply appalling. The usual plan of the natives seems to be to hold meetings when the Commission is about to deal with their lands at which they arrange what is to be told to the Commission and what is to be concealed ... It must not be supposed that the natives welcome the Commission. They know that they have much to lose and nothing to gain if the truth comes out and they resort to every possible means to conceal the truth (quoted in France, *ibid* 167).

Hence, one can argue that given the context within which his own inquiries were conducted, Maxwell’s affirmation of the encompassing nature of the *Vanua* is unfounded and therefore questionable. Furthermore, if the *Vanua* was the unquestionable structure of the *iTaukei* society, why were *iTaukei* coerced into organizing themselves within such a pyramidal structure. In 1914, Sir Bickham Sweet-Escort, for instance gave a stern warning to chiefs to organize their social organization in conformity to Maxwell’s social pyramid or lose their claims to land (*ibid* 168). Such coercion is indicative of the absence of an encompassing socio-political structure in the *iTaukei* society. This reality therefore, necessitated an executive order, for compliance.

As France notes:

The way was prepared for the conversion of the whole Fijian race to a uniform, symmetrical system of social structure and landownership on the instructions of the highest authority in the colony (ibid 169).

CONCLUSION

Fiji's colonial history evolved largely around the trajectories of the *Vanua* and the establishment of the legislative and institutional arrangement that regulates the control and rights over land, or the land tenure system. The establishments of these colonial projects were essentially imperative not only in terms of social cohesion, but more importantly in the entrenchment of the colonial economy. This dissertation constitutes an examination of Fiji's colonial history with, regard to the genealogies of these colonial projects and their role in determining "the power structure of the present" (Young 1999:4)

CHAPTER FOUR

BRITISH POLICY IN OCEANIA AND THE POLITICS OF COLONIAL APPROPRIATION

Introduction

A civilization that uses its principles for trickery and deceit is a dying civilization. The fact is that the so-called European civilization – "Western" civilization - as it has been shaped by two centuries of bourgeois rule, is incapable of solving the two major problems to which its existence has given rise: the problem of the proletariat and the colonial problem; that Europe is unable to justify itself either before the bar of "reason" or before the bar of "conscience"; and that, increasingly, it takes refuge in a hypocrisy which is all the more odious because it is less and less likely to deceive (Césaire 1955:1).

Great Britain's agenda in the annexation of Fiji on October 10th, 1874 was not dissimilar from those that led to the seizure of Australia on January 26th, 1788 and the annexation of New Zealand on May 21st, 1840. The notion of British benevolence in the annexations of New Zealand and Fiji was a justification in the extension of British rule in Oceania. This chapter focuses on the study of British policy in the Islands of the Pacific, in the later eighteenth and throughout the nineteenth century, and the ways in which British notions of 'responsibility', 'protection' and 'respect' for indigenous sovereignty in the Islands, camouflage British economic and geo-strategic agenda in the appropriation of colonies in Oceania. In short, this chapter critiques the notion of British benevolence in the Islands of the Pacific. This builds on to a critical discussion on the case of Fiji's annexations which will be examined in detailed in chapter six.

British policy in Oceania was one of ambivalence, ambiguity and contradiction (Davidson 1948:408; Samson 1998:3). The establishment of a penal colony in the far

distant land in the south sea was designed, at least according British officials, a means to ease the growing population of criminals in Britain's prison system (Abbott 2009:41). The enactment of the Murders Abroad Act of 1817 projected the notion of British responsibility in Oceania (Ward 1950: 48).

The 1817 Act most commonly known as the "minimum intervention policy," empowered Governors of the Australian Colonies, as well as British consuls and naval officers to adjudicate, the crimes of British subjects in Islands of the Pacific outside of the sovereign jurisdictions of Great Britain (ibid). The annexations of New Zealand in 1840 and that of Fiji in 1874 were rationalized as acts of British responsibilities to protect British subjects and preserve native populations (Campbell 1991:69-70). The notion of direct intervention by way of annexations was therefore driven by a moral responsibility of the British Government towards the South Pacific (ibid). 'Officially', British attitude and approach in the affairs of the Islands of the Pacific was one of responsibility articulated under the policy of minimum intervention which apart from the supervision of British subjects in the Islands, also included the guardianship role -which meant the protection of the region from the foreign encroachment of other colonial powers such the France, Germany and the U.S. (Ward 1950: 139).

However, an examination of British activities in the Islands by individual colonialists and those acting on behalf of the British Government, since the seizure of Australia in 1788 and throughout the nineteenth century, indicates that such activities often entails violence, exploitation, land dispossession, racial denigration, punitive expeditions against natives, as opposed to the effective adjudications of British settlers'

indiscretion, and the deployment of the politics of British convenience, often at the expense of Pacific Islanders. Great Britain for instance while claiming the role of guardianship of the Islands, on one hand, in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, sanctioned the exploitation of the Islands' resources, through its adjunct policy, on the other, to boost the establishment of its penal colony in New South Wales (Ward 1950 4-5). In addition, the disjuncture between official responsibility to protect human lives in the Islands, and the violence perpetrated against Australian Aborigines, Maori, and *iTaukei*, including the dispossession of their land, under British colonial administrations, renders the notion of British benevolence contradictory, ambivalent and ambiguous.

In the case of Australia, for instance, debates have emerged amongst historians whether, or not the British Government had ulterior motives in the establishment of a penal colony in a far distant land, in the South Sea (Spate 1988:301). Authors such as G.J. Abbott, Geoffrey Bolton and A.G.L. Shaw argue that there was nothing sinister about dumping criminals in New South Wales, except to ease overcrowding in Britain's prison, although the possibility of producing exportable commodities would be desirable (Abbott 2009:41). On the other hand, historians like Geoffrey Blainey, and Alan Atkinson argued that the British Government had a broader economic and geo-strategic agenda than simply to establish a penal colony (Blainey 1966).

In the cases of the annexations of New Zealand and Fiji, authors like Ian Campbell, Derryck Scarr, and John Ward have argued that British direct interventions were taken reluctantly by the British Government, to establish law and order and to protect human

lives, both British colonialists and natives. These authors who have written largely from a metropolitan or euro-centric positionality are what Donald Denoon describes as “those who have identified themselves with the rulers of the state” (1997:20).

While others such as Donald Denoon, Jane Samson and William Sutherland, argued that the notion of British benevolence was a justification and a veneer to camouflage the economic and geo-strategic interests of the British Government in the vast and enormous waters of Oceania.

John Ward’s analysis of British policy is critically important. Ward provides the trajectory of British policy in the Islands and accentuates its complexity. In his review of Ward’s *British Policy in the South Pacific*, J.W. Davison credits the author for his ability to capture the complex intersection between the intricacy of British policy and nature of complex events that took place in the Islands. According to Davidson: “British policy in the Pacific is a story of inaction punctuated by crises, of solutions slowly imposed by events and finally accepted under the threat of impending chaos” (ibid). Ward was able to capture such complexity, without necessarily articulating “spurious uniformity” (ibid). Ward, however, perpetuates the notion of British benevolence in the annexation of New Zealand and Fiji and fails to interrogate British agenda in the South Pacific.

This chapter is an attempt to critique notions of ‘responsibility’ and ‘protection’, or the idea of British benevolence, one that builds upon the arguments of authors such as Ward, Samson, and Sutherland. It contends that the seizure of Australia in 1788, and the annexations of New Zealand in 1840, and Fiji in 1874 were driven by three major comparable economic and geo-strategic factors as follows. The first entailed the tenacity

of the British Government to establish its geo-strategic hegemony in the region, in anticipation of potential colonial encroachment other colonial powers such as Spain, France, Germany and the U.S. The second was driven essentially by British economic interests in the Islands of the Pacific, and the third constituted the broader agenda of European economic expansion in the region, following the Industrial Revolution of which Britain played a leading role. In advancing this argument, this chapter examines British policy in Oceania in the eighteenth and nineteenth century to emphasize the comparable political and economic objectives that motivated Great Britain in the seizure of Australia in 1788; and the extension of British rule in New Zealand, and that of Fiji in 1840 and 1874 respectively. The chapter concludes with a critique on notions of British ‘responsibility’, ‘protection’ and the ‘respect’ for indigenous sovereignty which have shaped the annexation discourses on New Zealand and Fiji.

Trajectory of British Policy in Oceania in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century

British policy in Oceania was articulated through political apathy, adjunct policy, minimum intervention, and eventually direct intervention (Campbell 1991:67-69; Ward 1950:1; 41; 184). Its trajectory was initially shaped by the voyages of explorations taken by William Dampier in 1699 and those of “discoveries” led by Byron, Wallis, Carteret and Cook in the eighteenth century (ibid). With the exception, of Dampier, such voyages of expeditions were sanctioned by the British Admiralty “in search of the unknown Southern Continent, the mythical strait from the Pacific to the Hudson’s Bay” (ibid). As the result of these expeditions, (especially between 1764 and 1776), the Islands of the

Pacific, or what is contemporarily known as Oceania, was “discovered”, mapped, and registered in British and European official cartography (ibid). Further, at the end of Cook’s third voyage, (1776 -1780), it was clear to the British, that the scattered Islands in the Pacific Ocean were not only isolated, but they were neither economically prospective, nor politically valuable (ibid). Hence, British interest in this part of the world, in the words of John, M. Ward, “slackened perceptibly” (ibid). Ward went on to say that: “there was no reason why the British Government should seize on its undoubted opportunity of making the greater part of the South Pacific lands British territory” (ibid).

It was within this context that successive British Governments opposed to the extension of empire in the Islands of the Pacific, including Fiji. However, as will be seen from the discussion below, the policy of minimum intervention was abandoned, at different occasions, in pursuit of economic, political and geo-strategic interests, on the part of the British Government. This was evident in the seizure of Australia in 1788, the annexations of New Zealand, and Fiji in 1840, and 1874 respectively, and British direct intervention in the South Pacific between 1875 and 1906, in reaction to French and German colonial encroachment in the region (Campbell 1989:144-148). The discussion on British policy in Oceania is drawn from the analyses of Ian, C. Campbell’s article, titled: “British Treaties with Polynesians in the Nineteenth Century,” edited by William Renwick, in *Sovereignty and Indigenous Rights & The Treaty of Waitangi in International Context*, (1991), and his book titled: *A History of the Pacific Islands* (1996). Equally important is the discussion and analysis by John, M. Ward, in *British Policy in the South Pacific* (1950), and that of Jean Ingram Brookes in *International Rivalries in the Pacific Islands 1800-1875*.

Oceania was largely unimportant to British imperial gaze since the exploration of the Pacific Ocean in 1699 by William Dampier and others, such as Byron, Wallis, Carteret and Cook (Ward 1950:1). Oceania was viewed, as a territory with no prospects of lucrative economic gain, and its Ocean, as devoid of geo-strategic importance (ibid). As such, British official attitude in the South Pacific region was one of political apathy, articulated through the ad-hoc recognition of native sovereignty, adjunct policy, and the notion of minimum intervention (Campbell 1991:69-70; Ward 1950: 41, 47-49). Further, direct intervention, by way of annexations, only occurred in order, to protect the lives of both British subjects and natives. As such, apart from the seizure of Australia in 1788, the annexations of New Zealand in 1840, and that of Fiji in 1874, were rationalized under the notion British benevolent or humanitarian act.

According to Campbell, British dealings with the Islands of Oceania in the nineteenth century, took two major forms (1991:69). This entailed the attitude of political indifference deployed through consuls and naval officers, and the second constituted the treaty signing which was articulated at three different levels, namely extraterritoriality, the declarations of protectorate, and thirdly the ratifications of annexation treaties (ibid). Campbell articulates the politics of British indifference through what he calls “the comparative informality of the doctrine of native sovereignty” (1991:69). This ad-hoc recognition of native sovereignty implies that Great Britain did not recognize native governments, as it does with states and governments that exist in the West. As Campbell puts it:

Much as Britain was willing to accept the doctrine of 'native sovereignty', she was not willing to concede the same recognition as was due to states with constituted governments (ibid 72).

As such, the British, did not enter into formal agreement, or treaties, with native governments. However, while Britain held ad-hoc recognition of native sovereignty, it also assumed a sense political responsibility to the Islands, in terms of guardedness against colonial encroachment from other colonial powers. The politics of indifference, and guardedness against foreign colonial encroachment and was deployed through the appointment of consul, and naval officers, in the various Pacific Islands to supervise and control lawless British subjects and to "achieve whatever circumstances might require ibid" (ibid 69).

In the case of the Hawaiian Islands, for instance, the British Government neither ratified, nor disavowed two offers of cession in 1794 and 1843 respectively. The first cession, was secured by George Vancouver on behalf of Kamehameha (who later became the first Hawaiian Monarch) in 1794, and the second entailed a putative act of annexation orchestrated by Lord George Paulet (ibid 70 - 71). In the first offer, the British Government "seems to have taken no notice of it all" (ibid). While there was a tacit agreement between Hawaiian chiefs and His Majesty's Government that Hawaii was under British protection, no official statement was put out by the latter to demonstrate British sovereignty in the Hawaiian Islands (ibid 71). In the second, the British refused to accept Lord George Paulet's putative act of annexation, (as a result, of a series of allegation made by the acting consul against the Hawaiian Government), and instead chose to

acknowledge the independence of the Hawaiian Government, contingent upon a self-denying treaty.

In both instances, the British declined to annex the Islands, but instead recognized the independence of the Hawaiian Government after the Paulet episode (*ibid*). Hence in 1843 Britain entered into a self-denying agreement with France and the U.S. or the Anglo-French Convention (a mutual hands-off agreement), which established the recognition of the Hawaiian Government, and the termination of all forms of colonial expansion in the Hawaii Islands (*ibid*). Further, in the case of Tahiti, the British also refused to acknowledge native sovereignty of the islands and appeals made by its consul to establish protectorate status was likewise rejected. According to Campbell, Prichard's appeal in 1839 for the establishment of British protectorate was "not so much because he wanted to see an extension of British power, but because he believed that a French or American take over was increasingly likely" (*ibid* 73). Apparently, the French claimed Tahiti in 1842 and eventually annexed it 1880 (*ibid*).

In New Zealand, appeals by missionaries in the 1830s for British recognition of native government were also rejected (*ibid* 72). Similarly, the British also rejected appeals in the 1840s by Samoa and Tonga for British protectorate status. In Fiji, Great Britain accorded similar treatment (*ibid* 73). The native government set up by white-settlers between the late 1860s and early 1870s were given ad-hoc recognition, while multiple petitions for annexation, between 1858 and 1873 were equally rejected (*ibid* 74).

The second form of British policy in the Pacific Islands, was in the form of agreements or treaties with native peoples in the Islands of the Pacific. Agreements were

featured in three forms, namely extraterritorial, protectorate and annexation treaties. British treaties were designed basically to keep other colonial powers, from territorial gains in the Pacific. The South Pacific region became a “scene of international rivalry” in the mid-eighteenth century (Campbell 1989: 142). This was featured with the constant patrolling of the Pacific waters by American, British and French ships (1989: 142).

Also, the emergence of Germany as a new colonial competitor in the late 1880s, following its unification in 1871, made the colonial enterprise even more competitive (ibid). As a new colonial power and a late comer in the colonial enterprise, Germany was determined to grab as many colonies and territories as possible to establish a foothold in the world. As such, the absence of formal colonial establishment in Oceania by the late nineteenth century, presented the Islands of the Pacific, as a place as space for colonial encroachment. British reacted with a new zeal to establish a substantive presence in the region by way of treaty signing with indigenous governments of the Pacific Islands.

The policy of extra-territoriality, while limiting the extent of native sovereignty, on the one hand, it constituted British recognition of indigenous governments in Oceania (Campbell 1991: 78). The British first treaty in Oceania was with signed in 1836 with the Kingdom of Hawaii, which amongst other things, allowed British subjects to reside in the Kingdom under the protection of Hawaiian laws. In 1843, as already discussed, the British Government officially recognized the sovereignty of the Hawaii Kingdom under a self-denying agreement with France and the U.S. In New Zealand, King William IV acknowledged the independence of New Zealand in 1835, following a declaration of

independence by Maori Chiefs, and in 1839, it was added to the territory of New South Wales under an extraterritorial arrangement.

Extraterritorial treaties with Tonga and Samoa were ratified following the establishment of the Western Pacific High Commission in 1877, after the annexation treaty with Fiji in 1874 (ibid 79). The traditional island governments of Samoa and Tonga, for instance, gained formal British recognition through treaties of 1878 and 1879 (ibid). British extraterritorial treaties with these Islands were necessitated by American and German presence in the region.

Apparently, Samoa and Tonga had had treaties with Germany and the U.S. Both the Americans and Germans have accorded formal recognition of these Islands, and have secured most favored nations treaties (ibid 79). It is important to note, that British extraterritorial treaties with Tonga and Samoa in 1878 and 1879 were meant to counterbalanced, American and German initiatives. With Tonga, the treaty articulated, perpetual peace and friendship, extraterritorial jurisdictions amongst British subjects, and reciprocal extradition of criminals (ibid). This treaty was replaced in 1879 with substantial definition of extraterritorial jurisdiction (ibid 79). Samoa had signed treaties concurrently with Britain, France and the U.S. with similar conditions on each treaty. Apart from exclusive jurisdiction over its own nationals, the extraterritorial treaty also included rights to establish naval base, and exemption from import and export duties (ibid).

The second form of treaty signing, according to Campbell, constituted the declarations of protectorate status. In Melanesia, the British signed treaties with native

governments, and other colonial powers to establish British protectorate and spheres of influence to counter-balance French and German treaties. In 1884 the British declared the southeast coast of New Guinea as a protectorate, as a counter declaration to Germany's territorial claim in northern New Guinea (Campbell 1989:146-147). In Vanuatu, the British signed a joint treaty with France in 1887 to establish British and French Naval Commission. In 1886, the British signed a separate convention with Germany which defined spheres of interests between the powers. Under the Anglo-German convention, the British claimed Gilbert and Ellice Islands, as well as the Solomon Islands, excluding Buka, Bougainville, Choiseul, and Isabel, which fell under the German sphere. In New Guinea, the British were initially indifferent, and disavowed the action of the Queensland Government intention to annex eastern New Guinea (Campbell 1989: 146).

However, when the Germans declared a protectorate over New Guinea in 1884, Britain reacted with a counter declaration over New Guinea's south coast (ibid). This sparked an Anglo-German conflict over the region which was resolved, first with a mutually agreed border, and second with a convention signed in 1886 between the two parties, which articulated their respective sphere of interest in the region (ibid). The terms of the convention had Marshall Islands, Carolines and Palau, as German sphere of influence, including the northern islands of the Solomon Islands namely Buka, Bougainville, Choiseul, and Isabel.

Under the convention, the British had Gilbert, Ellice Islands and the rest of the Solomon Islands as British spheres of influence (ibid). The British later established protectorate status on Gilbert and Ellice Islands in 1892, and the Solomon Islands in 1893

with the exclusion of Bougainville, Buka, Choiseul, and Isabella (ibid 147). However, in 1899, the Germans surrendered Bougainville and Buka, to the British, in return for Western Samoa (ibid). In the same year the Germans annexed Western Samoa in Eastern Samoa was annexed by the Americans (ibid). In Polynesia, with the loss of Samoa, the British established a protectorate in the Cook Islands in 1888 amidst French colonial expansion in the South Pacific, and Tonga, following the ratification of a treaty of friendship in 1900 (ibid).

Annexation was the final means of treaty signing between Great Britain and the Islands of the Pacific, and this was exemplified in the cases of New Zealand and Fiji. The situation in New Zealand in early nineteenth century was in a state of anarchy (1989:137). This, according to Campbell was due to the absence a homogenous polity on the part of Maori, to act with a common policy and mutual support, in their dealings with Europeans who were invading their Islands, and the absence of law, to regulate the actions of Europeans who pursued to secure a livelihood in a new-found land (ibid).

Measures taken by the British Government, through Governors of New South Wales, by appointing Thomas Kendall in 1814 as a Justice of Peace, and the Acts of 1817 (which will be discussed below) failed to minimize the conflicts between Maoris and white colonialists (ibid). In 1832, a British Resident was appointed to establish British law and to supervise the behavior of its subjects (ibid). However, this was also ineffective, because he had no force to enforce his authority, and the absence of a centralized native authority “with which he could treat” (ibid). In 1839, the New Zealand Land Company began to purchase huge tracks of land in preparation for a settler colony and this fueled further

influx of White settlers into New Zealand, especially after the ratifications of the Treaty of Waitangi (Calman 2004:4; Belich 20-21).

This necessitated the direct intervention of the British Government to institute law and order for the protection of British subjects and natives. With multiple appeals for direct intervention from N.S.W and British settlers, the British Government in the words of Campbell “with no particular desire for further colonial obligations in the remote south, yielded to the inevitable,” – annexation (Campbell 137-138). As such, in 1839 naval officer Captain William Hobson was commissioned to negotiate with Maori chiefs for the annexation of New Zealand (ibid). Subsequently, in the month of May 1840, the Maori Chiefs and the British Crown ratified the Treaty of Waitangi upon which British sovereignty was established in the Islands.

In the case of Fiji, multiple appeals for annexation, by leading *iTaukei* chiefs, British settlers, and the Australian Colonies, between 1858 and 1874, were rejected (Derryck 1945; Drus 1950; Ward 1946) British rejection was consistent with it earlier practice of political indifference and minimum intervention, and justified by the report provided by Colonel Smythe, who was commissioned to inquire and report on Fiji, following Cakobau’s Offer of Cession to the British Government in 1858 (ibid). Smythe’s assignment and report will be discussed in chapter six, but at the outset, he reported that Fiji was neither economically viable, nor geo-strategically important to warrant British annexation. However, by the late 1860s and early 1870s the situation in Fiji could not escape the attention of the British Government. This included, first, the influx of white

settlers in the 1860s who were attracted by the prospect of cotton production and coconut oil.

From 1867, the influx led to a rush fueled by land speculation after the Polynesian Company bought land in anticipation for a settlement colony, which resembled the New Zealand experience in 1839. Secondly, was the perpetual failure of white settlers and leading *iTaukei* chiefs such as Cakobau, Ma'afu (the Tongan chief) and the Tui Cakau, to establish a united creditable government to rule over, the whole of Fiji (Donnerly et al, 1994:28-29; Legge 158:64; (Derrick1 946:158-159).

An attempt to establish a Confederation of Chiefs in 1865 failed after two years of its existence with Cakobau as President. Most chiefs withdrew when the Tongan chief, Ma'afu, secured the Presidency in 1867, and the Confederacy subsequently collapsed (ibid). The second attempt was in 1867, when a group of white settlers installed Cakobau as King of Fiji, but also failed when majority of white settlers refused to pay taxes. The final attempt to establish the Cakobau Government occurred in 1871 (Lal 1992:11; Legge 1958:78). However, after three years, organized armed resistance against its operation, and the unwillingness of white settlers to pay taxes led to its final collapse in 1874. After its collapsed, a period of political chaos ensued. There were rifts in both sides of the racial divide. The white settlers were polarized between the those that were responsible for the establishment of the Cakobau Government, and their cronies on the one hand, and those that did not support it, on the other (ibid). On the *iTaukei* sides intratribal conflicts emerged between those tribes that were complicit in land sales and those who were apprehensive of its largescale alienation (Derrick 1946: 192(Dijk 2015:70).

Despite factions on both sides, an armed conflict between white settlers and *iTaukei* was imminent (ibid). The large-scale alienation of native land, was a source of *iTaukei* outrage and resentment against the white community. There were frequent instances of attacks on the white settlers' communities across the country. White settlers became increasingly fearful of further attacks (ibid). At the same time, *iTaukei's* lives was also vulnerable from an organized assault from the white community. Amidst the chaos, the John Bares Thurston, former British consul and chief secretary under the Cakobau Government appealed once again to British authority to annex the Fijian Islands. The British Government responded by commissioning E.L Layard, Fiji's new consul, and Goodenough to inquire and report on the Fiji situation, and on 10th October 1874, the British Government annexed Fiji "reluctantly."

John Ward's analysis of British policy is also equally important to examine. Ward examines British policy in the South Pacific from 1786, (when the idea of establishing a penal colony in New South Wales was being considered by the British Government), to the reformation of the Western Pacific High Commission in 1893 (1950: xi). According to Ward, British policy in the region was articulated under the notions of political indifference, adjunct policy, and minimum intervention. The fundamental shift in British policy, visa 'vi annexation and other forms of direct intervention, were taken only when issues of geo-strategic interests took precedent, as well as the securement of the commercial and political interests of the Australasian Colonies (ibid 197-199).

Like Campbell, Wards argues that British initially had a policy of indifference to the region. However, in 1786, this changed slightly, from indifference to adjunct in

consideration of the establishment of a penal colony in Botany Bay, New South Wales, Australia (Ward 1950:1). British adjunct policy consisted of using the resources of Pacific Islands to supplement resources in the newly established penal colony, and the supervision of British convicts (ibid 4). The debate in the House of Commons on this subject exhibited the reluctance of the British Government to establish substantial relation with a country that Captain James Cook described as “barren and fertile”, or what Joseph Banks, the British Botanist, observed as barren soil, and “entirely void of the help derived from cultivation” and “could be supposed to yield much to support a man” (ibid 2). The British Government’s attitude towards Australia, and Oceania at large, was shaped by Cook and Banks observations and reports during Cook’s voyages of scientific expedition in the South Pacific (1768-1779) (ibid). According to the opposition voice in the British Government, New South Wales “was too desert and distant a country to support even a penal colony” (ibid 2). However, the British had a change of heart after Joseph Banks recalibrated his initial observation, when asked if Great Britain could benefit from the establishment of a penal settlement in Australia, to which he said the following:

If the people formed among themselves a civil government, they would necessarily increase, and find occasion for many European commodities; and it was not to be doubted, that a large tract of land such as New Holland, which was larger than the whole of Europe, would furnish matter of advantageous return (ibid 3).

The establishment of a penal colony in New South Wales necessitated the need to use the other Islands in Oceania as adjunct (ibid). In 1792, livestock such as hogs, goats and fowls, as well as salt meat, for instance were brought into NSW from Tahiti (ibid 6).

In addition, Rhode Island provided turtles to supplement food shortage in Sydney (ibid). However, the idea of importing women from Tonga, New Caledonia and other neighboring Islands to cohabitate with British convicts, did not eventuate. The adjunct policy led to the influx of British colonialists into the Islands of the Pacific as trade with the Islanders gained momentum (ibid 8). As the result, there was an unprecedented influx of Europeans in the Islands which became problematic as instances of abuse and exploitation of natives became a common occurrence.

The influx of British settlers, ship wreckers, and traders in Oceania in the beginning of nineteenth century led to increasing interactions with natives and unprecedented instances of fraudulent and devious practices against natives, including violence and deaths. Such problem became so acute that the Governor of New South Wales observed as early as 1805, that the Islands of the Pacific would become the “seat of Buccaneers and Sea Robbers” (Ward 1950: 31).

Conditions in the Islands were such that trade with the natives could only be carried through violence and in-fighting between traders themselves. Ward describes it as a state of “shameful depredations and wanton cruelties” (ibid 31).

The absence of clear legal jurisdiction by NSW inhibited initiatives to curb crimes committed by British subjects against natives. Meanwhile, the British were preoccupied with the Napoleonic Wars, and therefore became indifferent to the crises and chaos brewing in the Islands (ibid 33). Successive governors in NSW were caught between their primary responsibility, in the supervision of convicts, and the urgency of dealing with the mounting disorder in the region (ibid 34). Most of the indiscretion committed against

natives, were done by escaped convicts and traders from NSW. Despite the concerns of NSW Governors, the British Government itself never made any claim to exercise jurisdiction in the Islands (ibid 35). This necessitated the revisiting of British policy in the region.

In 1817, the British Government put in place a policy of minimum intervention. This was instituted through the enactment of an Act of Parliament, *The Murders Abroad Act*, 1817 (57 Geo. III, c. 53). The Act was designed to prosecute British subjects, guilty of murder and manslaughter residing in Oceania, “not within His Majesty’s dominions, nor subject to any European state or power, nor within the territory of the United States of America” (*Murders Abroad Act*, 1817 in Piggott 1902: 104). The Act, also considers Islands of the Pacific, as high seas, and therefore, the Murders Abroad Act of 1817, invokes the *Offences at Sea Act*, 1806 (Act 46, GEO. III, c54), which now means, that British subjects guilty of murder and manslaughter will be treated as crimes committed at high seas and will therefore be tried “by virtue of the King’s commission or commissions, which shall have been, or which shall hereafter be issued under and by virtue and in pursuance of the powers and authority of an Act 46, GEO. III, c54 [supra], in the same manner, as if such offence or offences had been committed on high seas” (ibid 103).

In his analysis of the policy of minimum intervention, Ward articulates three components that reflects British attitudes towards Oceania (1950:48). The first, is the absence of political interests and commercial ambition. This has been the long-standing policy of the British Government, a position that was largely influenced by reports given by Captain Cook and the botanist Sir Joseph Banks, on the limited nature of economic

development in the Islands of the Pacific (ibid 1). The South Pacific, as Ward puts it “could not offer the type of investment opportunity which British merchants were seeking”, neither should it be protected through official policy (ibid 42). In fact, it flourished better without official policy. The second constitutes the responsibility of the British Government to control and protect British subjects in the Islands. This was part of the broader effort to establish law and order, and therefore facilitate the exploitation of the resources of the “adjacent islands” South Seas to enhance to establishment of penal and settlement colony in New South Wales and other Australian Colonies (ibid 41). The third, articulates the maintenance of the status-quo (ibid 48). This meant that as long, as the Islands of the Pacific remain free from the colonial encroachment by other colonial powers, notably France and U.S.A, the British Government will maintain its position of non-direct intervention (ibid 139).

Put simply, Great Britain will only intervene directly, by way of annexations, or instituting protectorate status, should the Islands become vulnerable to the conquest by other colonial powers. Failure to do so, would mean risking the lives of British subjects to foreign powers, as well as, threatening British dominance in the region (ibid). As such, Great Britain ratifies treaties of non-intervention, or self-denying agreements with France and the United States of America, to ensure and entrench its non-intervention policy in Oceania. With regard, to Hawaii, for instance the Anglo-French treaty of 1843 entailed the principle of self-denying upon which Britain and France recognized the independence of Hawaii and agreed to abstain from territorial gain (Campbell 1991:71).

Similar arrangement was made when France declared the Society Islands (Tahiti) and the Georgian Islands, of Raiatea, Huahine, and Borabora.

The British, recognizing the good harbor of Borabora, challenged the French authority, that the Georgian Islands did not fall under the jurisdiction of Queen Pomare and therefore should be left alone. This arrangement was formalized in the Declaration of London in June 1847 where the two powers acknowledged the independence of Windward Islands and therefore agreed to abstain territorial possession (Ward 1950:145). The London Declaration remained in force until 1888 when the Anglo-French Convention regarding the case of New Hebrides (present day Vanuatu) took effect (ibid).

Overall, the policy of minimum intervention constituted what Ward describes as “a policy of narrower interests -of indifference, tempered only by the necessity of providing protection and supervision of British subjects in the South Pacific.”

The policy was also an attempt (a failed one) to create law and order in order, to facilitate the systematic exploitation of the resources of the Pacific Islands, and at the same, assuming a position of guardedness against colonial encroachment from other maritime powers, such the U.S and France, and emerging colonial powers, most notably Germany (ibid). However, the initial policy of political indifference, and that of minimum intervention, took fundamental shifts at different occasions, when it was necessary for the British Government to protect its economic and geo-strategic interests in the region. This will be discussed below.

Juxtaposition of British Colonial Agenda in Australia, New Zealand, and Fiji

The colonial appropriations of these territories should be understood in the context of British imperialism, visa 'vi, economic expansion, (which is related to the second reason) “a system of control which secured markets and capital investment. The colonization these regions therefore secured British and European control of Oceania and the subjugation of its native peoples through plantations economies, export oriented economies, and the incorporations of Pacific Island economies into the global capitalist economy.

As previously discussed, the Islands of the Pacific became known to Europe after the completion of Cook's three major voyages in the Pacific, according to his assignments to observe the transit the Venus (1768-1771), explore the mystical and unknown Southern Continent (1772-1775), and the search for a route from the Pacific to the Atlantic round the top of North America or the North-West Passage (Banner 2007:14). It was after these voyages that Oceania was not only registered in western official cartography, but its limited economic potential was also realized. As already being discussed, given Cook's reports from his Pacific voyages, Great Britain inclination towards the region became one of political indifference. However, after a little over a decade from Cook's final voyage, that the British became interested in the eastern coast of New Holland, as a penal colony (Ward 1948: 1). After lengthy political debates in the House of Commons, with strong opposition to the idea of creating a colonial outpost in the distant South Sea, a consensus emerged in the urgency to establish British presence in a region considered to be

potentially geo-strategically important, and economically valuable (Brookes 1941:1-3; Ward 1948:3-4).

In anticipation of imperial rivalry from maritime powers such as France, the Netherlands, the United States and even Russia - a British naval station was established in the harbor of Sydney in 1796 (Brookes 1941:3). After the end of the Napoleonic Wars in 1815, the French sent a series of scientific and commercial expeditions to the South Sea with an eye on Australia. This included Freycinet (1817), Duperrey (1822), Bougainville (1824); Dumont d'Urville (1826), Laplace (1829), Vaillaint (1836), Du Petit-Thouars (1836), and again Laplace and Dumont d'Urville in (1837) (*ibid*). In response to this, the British Government ordered its naval fleet in Sydney to complete charting the entire Australian coast and to "leave at every spot touched indisputable evidence that British forces had landed; or to send a garrison and settlers to occupy some promising harbor recently made known to Europe (*ibid* 3).

Great Britain had intended right from the beginning that Australia would be exclusively British. When the French contemplated in 1825 to establish a penal colony in the Southern Continent, the British responded that French occupation of in any part of Australia will be regarded as an unjustifiable intrusion (*ibid* 4). When a French official inquired the extent of British intent in the acquisition of Australia, Lord John Russel, the incumbent colonial secretary (1839-1841) replied, "The Whole of it" (*ibid* 6).

French rivalry was also a compelling reason in British acquisition of New Zealand. Before annexation, the British, the Americans and the French were active in various trades around New Zealand. Their whalers, traders and sealers were working around the New

Zealand coastline. Deep-sea whaling commenced during the years 1791-2, the first arrival being the whaler, "William and Ann". Shortly later, in 1792, the whaler "Britannia" began operating in Dusky Sound (South Island). From 1797 American whalers arrived, and during the 1830s the French whaling ships turned up in significant numbers. Seals were hunted, and their skins taken for the Chinese market.

Spars were also cut for the Chinese market and the Indian Navy. The flax also trade grew. Throughout this period, these colonial powers had had their covetous eyes on Aotearoa. British settlers arrived in large numbers in the 1820s and by 1838 the North Island was populated with British settlers.

As already being discussed, that the Australian Colonies and British settlers have sent multiple appeals to Great Britain to annex the Islands. In 1814, a Justice of Peace (JP), Thomas Kendall, was stationed in New Zealand. As British settlers increased, a British Resident was appointed in 1832 to supervise and control the behavior of British settlers, a responsibility that given the presence of non-British subjects. With no force to support his authority and the absence of centralized authority within Maori society to consult, his position was rendered ineffective. Throughout this time, the British Government was warned on three different occasion, that procrastinating direct intervention in New Zealand would result in French annexation (Ward 1945:114).

In 1831, the Governor of New South Wales alerted the Colonial Office of a French ship *La Favorite* (Captain La Place) that was alleged to have taken possession of New Zealand (ibid). Again in 1837, 40,000 acres of land was alleged to have been purchased by the Frenchman, the Baron de Thierry "with a grandiloquent offer of liberal

government" (ibid). In 1838, the British resident consul warned the British Government of a possible French settlement in New Zealand (ibid).

According to Brookes, the French Colonial Minister, in 1838 turned a purposeful attention towards New Zealand in connection to the land purchase by Thierry (1941:95). The French Minister appealed to the French Government to make an agreement with De Thierry since he had gained a foothold in New Zealand (ibid 96). As a result, a company was formed, called the "Bourdelaïse Compagnie" and two vessels set sailed to New Zealand, under Commodore Laborde, filled with emigrants, reaching the Bay of Islands only a few days after the Treaty of Waitangi was signed (ibid 99). Apparently, as the pressure for British annexation intensified, the British Government, in 1839, appointed Captain William Hobson as consul and to negotiate annexation with Maori chiefs which eventually led to the ratification of the Treaty of Waitangi, in May 1840.

The French did not recognize British sovereignty in New Zealand until 1844, when it was contemplating the acquisition of Tahiti (Ward 1945: 116). The Americans, according to Brookes, had extensive interests in New Zealand than the French. An American exploring expedition was in New Zealand at the time the Treaty of Waitangi was ratified (1941:102). It appointed its consul in 1839 and invested heavily in shipping in the Bay of Islands, timber trade and sperm whaling industries (ibid 103). However, being a British subject, the U.S. consul, Clendon "did everything in his power" to further the ratification of the Treaty of Waitangi in return for 10,000 acres of land (ibid). Apparently, he had almost forgotten to inform Washington of British annexation, much to the indignation of the

U.S. Government. In fact, the U.S. Government refused to recognize British annexation of New Zealand, until 1843 (ibid 143).

In the case of Fiji, the American and British Governments established consuls there in the 1850s in anticipation of the opening of the Panama Canal (Derryck 1945: 132). Fiji was expected to be a suitable coaling station for steamships travelling between Panama and Sydney as early as 1834 (Ricci 1874: 6-7). According to William Thompson Stead, the British Admiralty viewed the world into nine divisions, and Fiji belonged to the fifth, under Australia (1884: 14 & 26)). Each of these divisions have coaling stations that served British naval and commercial interests. In the case of war, the position of the British Empire depended on the securement and protection of its coaling stations abroad, and the efficacy of its naval fleet. As such the coaling stations play a critical role in times of war and empire building. Stead articulates it as follows:

Without coal a modern man-of-war can do nothing. It can neither move nor fight. In olden times the sailors asked for nothing but favorable wind to carry the British flag all around the world. Today all this is changed. Our mastless ironclads lie like hulks on the water, incapable of motion or direction without coal ... Coal therefore is vital to the existence of the modern fleet, and its power of action is limited by its proximity to a coaling station ... Hence in a case of war, the first question that would arise is as to the safety of our coaling stations. They are the stepping stones of empire. Without their aid, no man-of-war could get around the world (ibid 23).

In this respect, coaling stations were considered into three categories. The first category signifies a primary Admiralty coaling station, then there is secondary Admiralty coaling station and the third constitutes a mercantile coaling station (ibid 26). The third speaks of the importance of coaling station in securing the economic interests of Great

Britain and other maritime powers. Fiji was categorized as a secondary station which was “useful commercially, and of considerable importance in a naval war” (ibid 37). In this context Fiji was critically important to Great Britain both militarily and commercially. It was apparently the only Pacific Island, apart from New Zealand to feature in the nineteenth century- priority listing of British coaling stations, and the most important in the world (ibid 14 & 16). Fiji was listed with coaling stations such as Hong Kong, Singapore, Cape of Good Hope, Aden, Mauritius, Bombay, Calcutta, Trincomalee, Halifax, Bermuda, The West Indies: Jamaica and St Lucia, Falkland Islands, Sierra Leone, and the Australian Station-Melbourne and Sydney (ibid 25-37). C. De Thierry argues that Fiji, “in the wilderness of the South Pacific” assumed naval and commercial importance by colonial powers, when viewed from “shores of the Isthmus of Panama” (1900:120). As such, colonial rivalries were partly transferred to the Ocean of the Pacific with Fiji as focus of attention (ibid).

Further, the geo-strategic importance of Fiji became obvious, after British annexation of the Islands on October 10th, 1874, with regard, particularly to the entry of Germany in to the colonial race (Ward 1948:262; Dijk 2015:66-67). Germany became a unified nation in 1871 after centuries of political fragmentation since the Investiture Struggle in the Middle Ages, and foreign domination by other European powers such as France, Austria and Prussia between the fifteenth and eighteenth century ((Lehning 2003: 172).

Given its late entry into the colonial race in the early 1870s the German became a formidable force in Oceania between 1877 and 1900 and the Scramble for Africa between

1871 and 1910 (ibid). German colonial aggression in Oceania deteriorated the nature of British and French colonial rivalry in the Pacific and threatened British unofficial hegemony in an informal empire. During this time, the French had annexed Marquesas in 1842, and Mangereva in the Gambier Islands in 1844, while the annexation of Tahiti was reversed after the British vehemently protested it, given its dominant commercial activities in the Society Islands (Dijk 2015:64-65). German's territorial aggression since the 1870s triggered Great Britain's direct intervention into the affairs of Pacific Island countries between the 1870s and the early years of 1900 (Campbell 146-148).

It was in this context, that Fiji's geo-strategic importance became crucial. Ward observes, that the British annexation of the Fijian Islands had indeed secured Great Britain the geographical center of the South Pacific (1948:262).

The establishment of the Western Pacific High Commission (WPHC) in Fiji in 1877 was indicative of the Islands strategic location. Apart from regulating the Pacific Islands' Labor Trade, which was alleged to be soaked in blood, a subject that will be discussed in chapter six, the WPHC also became a vehicle for British imperial expansion generally, amidst French and German colonial encroachment particularly in the Western Pacific (Scarr 1967: xiv-xvii). As already discussed, that after the annexation of Fiji in 1874, and the subsequent establishment of the WPHC in 1877- marked a shift in British policy from political indifference to native governments in Oceania to official recognition. This according to Campbell was deployed through treaty agreement.

The WPCH became instrumental in treaty signing as Great Britain fight for political and economic hegemony in Oceania amidst American, French and German colonial

encroachment. The WPHC, for instance became British entity for forging extra-territorial agreement with Tonga in 1878 and Samoa in 1879. As Campbell puts it:

In fact, the governments of Samoa and Tonga were recognized by Britain only because the United States and Germany respectively had accorded recognition and secure most- favored- nations treaties (1991:78).

As discussed earlier the British, appropriated Gilbert and Ellice Islands in 1892 and parts of the Solomon Islands in 1893. In compensation to the German annexation of Western Samoa, Great Britain was given with the rest of the Solomon Islands except Bougainville and Buka. In this context, the WPHC took on comprehensive administrative functions in these Islands, including health, taxation, communications, land policy, and public works (Scarr 1967: xviii). Undoubtedly, the location of the WPHC in Fiji and its role in facilitating British expansionist role in Oceania, between the 1870s and 1900, speaks of Fiji geo-strategic importance in Oceania. As Ward puts it:

In the 'seventies the only island group in which British interests not only predominated over those of all other Powers, but were themselves considerable, was Fiji ... the annexation of Fiji had given Great Britain a territorial interest in what was geographically the central and economically the most important group in the South Pacific ... 1950: 261-262).

Further, British economic agenda dominated the colonial appropriations of Australia, New Zealand and Fiji. While the annexation of Fiji did not benefit the British economy directly, it nevertheless benefitted the Australian Colonies. In many ways, the annexation of New Zealand and Fiji shared common characteristics, which will be discussed below. In Australia, British economic agenda dominated the debate in contemplating the establishment of a penal colony in the distant south sea (Ward, 1950:3).

For this reason, Joseph Banks was called before the House of Commons Committee on Transportation for give evidence on the potential for economic development in Australia (ibid). As earlier discussed, Banks, was a British botanist who accompanied Captain Cook on his first voyage (1768-1771) visiting Brazil, Tahiti, New Zealand, and Australia. Banks and Cook initially provided negative reports on the east coast of New Holland (as it was called) present day New South Wales. Banks recalibrated his account afterwards before the House of Commons asserting that Australia offered the potential for lucrative economic gain for Great Britain (ibid).

In a document called the “Heads of a Plan” the British Government laid the rationale for the establishment of a colonial outpost in a far distant land (ibid). There have been debates amongst historians about whether the Government had underlying reasons in colonizing Australia, as opposed to just dumping criminal in a far distant land. Watkin Tench, a captain lieutenant of the Charlotte, and a First Fleet officer, was the first to question the logic of a penal settlement in the Botany Bay (Spate 1988:300).

He speculated that there was more to the establishment of a British colonial outpost in Botany Bay than just the placing of criminal convicts. Amongst others, it included the geo-strategic domination of the Pacific and “its possible use of a waystation on new routes to the East Indies and China” (ibid). This argument was further developed by Geoffrey Blainey who argued that England was after the exploitation of flax, timber and hemp available in the region especially in Norfolk Islands and New Zealand (1968:34). These products, will enhance British naval hegemony around the globe. According O.H.K Spate, the fact that Norfolk Islands was occupied three weeks after the arrival of

Arthur Phillip, the first colonial Governor in Botany Bay, was indicative of the economic agenda of the British Government (1998: 304). Further, Blainey argued the choice of place for a penal colony in a far distant land creates the suspicion that the British Government had a broader agenda than just dumping convicts in Botany Bay (1968:35).

According to Blainey the Bermuda or the West Indies would be more economical in terms of distance (*ibid*). However, those who disagree with the above speculation, such as G. J. Abbott whose position is as follows:

When it decided to form a convict settlement at the Botany By, the British government probably hoped that New South Wales would eventually provide some exportable commodities or other benefits, nevertheless it made its decision simply because it had to do something to ease overcrowding in the country's prison (2009:41).

The economic importance of New Zealand was already apparent to the British Government as early as 1873, when James Matra advocated for the establishment of a colony of settlement in Botany Bay (Spate 1988:301-302). Matra argued that New Zealand would be an excellent source of flax and hemp, for canvas and cables, and its wealth of timber, for masts and spars (*ibid*). As early as the 1790s occasional shiploads of timber were sent to India and China while sealing on the south-west coasts of the South Island was a growing enterprise around 1803, with a market in China and later in London. By the 1920s New Zealand had already become an important commercial center of trade for whalers, sealers, timber and flax traders, farmers, pastoralists and land speculators. Deep-sea hunting of the sperm whale was added the quest for the "right" or black whale, especially when it was calving in the sheltered inlets of Tasmania and New Zealand.

Shore bases were established for this purpose; the first in New Zealand by a Sydney whaler in Tory Channel in 1827. In the course, of the 1830s twenty shore stations, mostly in the South Island, were established by Sydney firms. The oil and bone obtained was exported to England via Sydney. The search for the black whale boosted the infant industry, as did an increase of the British demand in the 1820s and a reduction of duties on oil and bone. Though, New Zealand was not a British colony, whale products caught in her waters and sent to England via Australian ports.

Notwithstanding the reluctance of the British Government to annex New Zealand, the need for land, for British investment, and settlement purposes was an important consideration for the British Government (Ward 1950:100-101). The social and economic consequences of the Industrial revolution necessitated the need to resettle British surplus population and capital elsewhere (*ibid*). Unemployment was on the rise and social conditions had deteriorated. New Zealand therefore became an attractive alternative to the British.

A figure that loomed large between 1829 and 1850 was Edward Gibbon Wakefield, whose idea of 'systematic colonization' played an important role in British emigration as well as, in shaping British colonial practices of land appropriation and commercial agriculture in Australia and New Zealand (Sook 1986:5). Gibbon's notion of systematic colonization entailed land purchase, at a considerable price, the use of revenue from the land to import laborers preferably young couples, and largescale agriculture (*ibid* 12). In 1830 Gibbon established the colonization society to advocate his principles of systematic colonization (Dawsons 1968:3). Wakefield's scheme of colonization was driven by private

investors and emigrants, as well as the government. The latter was crucial for the purpose, of granting a “monopoly for disposing colonial lands” (Sook 1986: 5).

Gibbon’s colonization principles were first implemented in South Australia in 1834, under the South Australian Association (Sook 1986: 143-144). By 1840, a total of 14,000 emigrated to South Australia, both passage payers and free emigrants (ibid 276).

Following the South Australian precedent, the New Zealand Association was established in 1837, of course, through the influence of Wakefield (ibid 188). In the same year Wakefield appealed before Commons Committee on New Zealand that his scheme could very be effective in New Zealand (ibid). In advocating the systematic colonization of New Zealand Wakefield said the following:

Very near to Australia there is a country, which all testimony concurs in describing as the fittest country in the world for colonization; I mean New Zealand. It will be said New Zealand does not belong to the British Crown ... ; but Englishmen are beginning to colonize New Zealand ... Adventurers go from New South Wales and Van Diemen’s Land, and make treaty with native chief; ... for a few trinkets and a little gunpowder they obtain land ... We are, I think, going to colonize New Zealand, though we be doing so in a most slovenly, and scrambling, and disgraceful manner (ibid 188).

As such, the New Zealand Association petitioned the British Government to sanction its mission through the enactment of an Act of Parliament. After initially being frigid and hostile to Wakefield’s preposition, the Undersecretary for Colonies, the Lord Glenelg (Charles Grant) changed its position in favor of the colonization of New Zealand (Ward 1950:99). This according Glenelg, was necessary to protect both British subjects and Maoris (ibid).

As the country was already being colonized, the only question ... is between a colonization desultory, without law, and fatal to the natives, and a colonization organized and salutary (quoted in Sook 1986:202).

Glenelg, however, disagreed with the idea of a Government sanctioned project, but instead offered the Association a royal charter, similar, to those for the North American colonies of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (ibid). He also denied them the monopoly right in the colonization of New Zealand in view of granting other group similar charters (ibid). With the failure to obtain official sanctioning, Wakefield in 1839 restructured the Association under the New Zealand Company, in compliance to the Glenelg's advice with the hope that the Government might change its mind. But this was not to be the case. Interestingly, in 1839, the British Government opted to deal directly with the colonization of New Zealand and therefore excluded the involvement of the New Zealand Company (Sook 1986: 214).

Hence the Colonial Office commissioned Hobson to secure the consent of Maori chiefs in handing over the sovereignty of New Zealand to the British Crown. As earlier discussed the Treaty of Waitangi was signed on May 21st, 1840. Amongst other things, the Treaty gave the British Government exclusive right to purchase land, which essentially facilitated the alienation of huge chunk of Maori Land for settlement and largescale agriculture. In October 1840, the British Government recognized the New Zealand Company as an instrument of government in the colonization of New Zealand (Dawsons 1968:43).

As such, the British Crown used the Treaty of Waitangi to obtain the exclusive right of purchase, or the pre-emptive right to purchase Maori land (Williams 1999: 51). This put in motion, a series of law, which eventually led to the alienation of almost the entire land, of Aotearoa. Between 1840 and 1864, the Maori had lost, ninety-nine percent of the entire South Island, and thirty four percent of the North Island, to the New Zealand Settler Government, and the New Zealand Company (ibid 53-54). Apart from land purchase, land was also taken away through the validation of old claims prior to the endorsement of the Treaty of Waitangi under the Land Claims Ordinance of 1841, and the confiscation of land, under the New Zealand Settlement Act of 1863 (ibid 51-52). The Treaty of Waitangi effectively secured the alienation of native land in New Zealand for the purpose, of establishing a settler colony of predominantly British subjects in adherence to Wakefield's principles of systematic colonization.

The annexation of Fiji was not dissimilar from British motives in the cases of Australia and New Zealand. This will be discussed in detailed in the next chapter, but at the outset, it is important to point out, that the pressure to annex Fiji, came with force from the Australian Colonies. Commercial trade between Fiji and the Australian Colonies gained momentum in 1860s when the American Civil War broke out. Fiji immediately became a vital producer of the best quality of cotton to the Australian Colonies. When the cotton boom ceased sugar replaced cotton and became increasingly important at the opening of the 1870s.

Not only the Australian Colonies and British settlers that wanted British annexation of Fiji. The German and American settlers in Fiji also recognized Fiji's political

and commercial importance. As such petitions were sent to their respective governments for either the establishment of protectorate status or annexation (McIntyre 1960: 371-372). The Germans in 1869 for instance appealed to the North German Confederation for protectorate of the Fijian Islands, to which Bismarck declined courteously. Despite the disinclination, the Germans appointed a consul immediately and Bismarck promised to send a gunboat to visit the Islands (ibid 371). In their petition to the American Government, the American settlers wrote the following:

We therefore, the undersigned subscribers, being composed, firstly of residents in the group, and secondly, of others who have identified our fortunes with it, earnestly pray that you will, at an early date, announce to the world your resolve to extend the protection of your flag to these islands and waters permanently. 6. The geographical position of the group in the South Pacific Ocean points to it as being a suitable naval and coaling station in American interests ... 8. The exquisite climate of the Fijis, with their valuable productions such as cotton (none finer in the world) sugar, cocoa-nut oil, naturally leads reflecting and enterprising men to look forward to these islands as becoming a desirable residence for both Americans and Europeans, ... 9. We therefore again earnestly express the hope that the prayer of this petition for the protection of the American flag (under our own system of self-government) may be answered in the affirmative. – We have the honor to be, Sir, your most obedient servants (*The Melbourne Papers* in Ricci 1875:47-48).

The American consul however refused to send the petition home and the State Department indicated that it has no intention to interfere in Fiji (McIntyre 1960: 372). Be that as it may, the Americans expressed its interests in building a coaling station in Kadavu (southern Fiji) and Nadi in the west, in anticipation of the Californian and Australian mail lines (ibid 373; Moss 1870: 54). The American and German expressions of interests in the Islands of the Pacific, “caused British officials to pause and reflect in their Fijian deliberations on more than one occasion (ibid).

Juxtaposition of Annexation Discourses in New Zealand and Fiji and the Politics of Territorial Expansion

The annexation of New Zealand through the Treaty of Waitangi on May 21st, 1840, and the ratification of the Fiji's Deed of Cession on October 10th, 1874, followed similar trajectory of events, which culminated to the extension of British rule in the Islands of the Pacific. More importantly, the official attitude of the British Government in both cases, reflected the disjuncture between British reluctance to annex, and its sense of responsibility to indigenous Pacific Islanders, on the one hand, and British political and economic motives that necessitated British direct intervention in these territories, on the other.

In both instances settlers and merchants from the Australian Colonies settled in the Islands, exploitation of natural resources was rampant, agricultural economies were established, large tracks of land alienated, eruptions of conflicts between white settlers and natives and the need for British direct intervention to establish law and order. More importantly, the protection of the commercial environment that had flourished in these Island and the growing lucrative trade with the Australian Colonies necessitated British direct intervention. In other words, the urgency to protect the economic interests of the Australian Colonies and the entrenchment of British geo-strategic interests in Oceania trumps British conventional policy of political indifference and minimum intervention.

Also in both instances, trade between these territories, and the Australian Colonies thrived prior to annexation necessitating British annexation at the urgings and multiple appeals from the Australian Colonies. In both instances, these Islands were exporting

timber, flax, fur and agricultural commodities such as cotton, sugar and copra to the Australian Colonies besides providing their excellent harbors for American and British whaling industry.

But perhaps the most striking similarities is the comparable political discourses in the annexation of these Islands that perpetuates notions of British benevolence in the Islands of the Pacific. In this section, the author critiques such discourses. In articulating the British intervention in the case of New Zealand, Ward said the following:

The form by which it was decided to establish British sovereignty in New Zealand reflected the combined influences of the long recognition of native sovereignty and the political expediency of securing native agreement to British rule. Although it was doubtful whether the natives really had any sovereignty to cede, the British Government determined to proceed by negotiating for a cession of sovereignty.

... In this latter respect the Treaty marked a new departure in British colonial policy. It was one of the first attempts made to protect a native people against the pressure of the incoming civilization and showed the continued influence of humanitarianism in the attitude of the colonial Office towards New Zealand

At the outset, the above assertion implies that the British had always been respectful of native sovereignty in the Islands, and any form of substantial involvement, such as the annexation of New Zealand, was carried out with a sense of responsibility and commitment to native leaders. However, between 1699 and 1877 the British refused to give formal recognition of native sovereignty in the Islands of the Pacific. Apart from New Zealand and Hawaii, the British did not recognize native sovereignty in any other parts of Pacific Islands. In Hawaii, British recognition of Hawaiian independence in 1843 was contingent on the agreement that the French restrain from colonial encroachment in the Hawaiian Islands.

In New Zealand, British recognition of Maori sovereignty, in 1835 through the establishment of the Confederation of United Tribes, was part of its broader strategy to secure native consent to British annexation. Apart from these politically motivated recognition of native sovereignty, British policy in other parts of the Pacific Islands was that of non-recognition of native sovereignty. British recognition of native sovereignty was either to secure a foothold in the islands in which native recognition is granted, or to prevent colonial encroachment from other colonial powers. The former was evident in the case of Tonga and Samoa in 1777 and 1778, when the British competed for territorial appropriations in these Islands. Hence, the claim of “long recognition of native sovereignty” is simply untrue.

Secondly, questioning the sovereignty on the part of Maori chiefs and the legitimacy of ceding their Islands to the British Government is both mischievous and arrogant. Maori had sovereignty of their Islands even in the absence of a centralized authority. The question was not whether Maori chiefs had the sovereignty to cede their Islands. The question rather, was whether the British Government had genuine intention to protect the interests of the natives and honor their commitment articulated in the Treaty of Waitangi.

Thirdly, is the issue of the protection of the natives. The systematic appropriation of Maori land through land purchase, confiscation and the validation of old claims (most of which were bought very cheaply and through devious means) prior to the Treaty of Waitangi speaks more about the evisceration of a people through land dispossession, than protection. The resultant Maori Land Wars and the massacres of Maori speaks more

of the annihilation of a people than protection. The annexation discourse in New Zealand is also repeated in the case of Fiji. British annexation of the Fijian Islands was the last resort, taken reluctantly by the British Government to protect human lives.

Conclusion

Contrary to claims of benevolence and humanitarianism, the activities of the British Government in Oceania reflected one of a quintessential colonizer whose agenda was to conquer, subjugate and exploit. British colonialism in Oceania was one that was predicated on violence, the land dispossession and economic marginalization of the natives. The case of the annihilation of Australian Aborigines between 1788 and 1900, the Maori Land Wars between 1845 and 1872, and the institutional land dispossession of *iTaukei* as the result of colonial land policy between 1875 and 1940, are indicative of British colonial violence and brutality in Oceania.

CHAPTER FIVE

TRAJECTORY OF EVENTS LEADING UP TO ANNEXATION 1849-1874; AND THE ANNEXATION DISCOURSE

Introduction

Colonization and civilization?

In dealing with this subject, the commonest curse is to be the dupe in good faith of a collective hypocrisy that cleverly misrepresents problems, the better to legitimize the hateful solutions provided for them (Cesaire 1955:1-2).

This chapter has two parts. The first examines the trajectory of events, beginning in 1849 and the lead up to Fiji's annexation to Great Britain on 10th October 1874. The second examines and critiques the standard accounts of the annexation discourse in Fiji.

In Fiji, the period between 1849 and 1874, was an important era in Fiji's pre-colonial period. Events that occurred during this epoch were critical in the lead up to British annexation. This included: (i) the rise of the Bau and the entrenchment of Ratu Seru Cakobau's power on coastal Viti Levu, and the maritime islands; (ii) the fire at the residence of the U.S. commercial agent, and the compensation claims, or the American Claims; (iii) the rise of Ma'afu and the establishment of the Tovata Confederacy; (iv) the unscrupulous deal of the Polynesian Company; the collapse of the white settler's government in 1871; and (v) the final negotiations for annexation between British naval officers and *iTaukei* chiefs from August to October 1874.

There were also several important figures whose involvement in the above events were critical in the lead up to annexation. This included, Ratu Seru Cakobau, the self-

proclaimed Tui Viti; John Williams Brown, the U.S. commercial agent, who was later appointed the first U.S. consul to Fiji; the Tongan Enele Ma'afu's, as a powerful figure in eastern Fiji; and finally, Commodore Goodenough, who was commissioned by the British Government on August 1874 to negotiate with *iTaukei* chiefs for the final offer of cession. The actions of these individuals between 1849 and 1874, had had fundamental impacts on the future of Fiji's socio-political and economic configurations.

Contrary to claims of British moral responsibility, this dissertation asserts that Great Britain's economic, political and geo-strategic interests underlined the annexation of Fiji (Sutherland 1992:20). The standard discourse is centered on the notion of British benevolence (Campbell 1996: 143, Ward 1950: 238; Legge 1958:132). In this discourse, it is argued that the extension of British rule in Fiji was necessitated by the need to restore law and order and to protect the lives of British subjects and *iTaukei* (ibid). To stand idle and do nothing while its subjects wreaked havoc on the *iTaukei* society would be morally wrong and irresponsible (Sutherland 1992:20). Second, it was also justified as part of a broader initiative by the British Government to curb slave-trade or black-birding in the Pacific. This policy was consistent with the enactment of the Slave Trade Act of 1807 which effectively eliminated the practice of Trans-Atlantic Slavery in Britain. The Act projected Great Britain as a leading abolitionist nation in Europe, and the world, and the extension of similar gesture to the Islands of the Pacific enhanced British depiction of British benevolence.

However, a critical examination of annexation petitions between 1869 and 1873, most notably by the Australian Colonies reveals a different narrative. The Australian

Colonies in their petition to the British Government for the annexation of the Fijian Islands underscored Fiji's economic and political significance not only to the Australian Colonies, but also to the British Empire. Further, an examination of the debate in the House of Commons during this period reveals that the British had vested interests, both economically and geo-strategically, that warranted the extension of British rule in the Fijian Islands (Ricci 1874:93). The notion of benevolence was simply an excuse. It was noted that if Great Britain failed to annex Fiji, the islands could potentially be claimed by either the French, or the Germans. That would have undermined Britain's economic and political interests in the region. In its 1870 petition the Australian Colonies stated that:

... the establishment by any foreign government of supreme authority there would naturally and necessarily be distasteful, and prejudicial commercially in time of peace to the Australian Possessions of the Crown ... (*The Viscount of Canterbury to the Earl Granville, August 12, 1870 in Ricci 1874:93*).

The American Debt, and the Rivalries between Cakobau and Ma'afu

Fiji became a center of attraction to the colonial powers, particularly France, Great Britain and the U.S. in the mid-eighteenth century, at a time when it was proposed that a canal would be built across the Isthmus of Panama (ibid 132). This is the narrow strip of land that lies between the Caribbean Sea and the Pacific Ocean, linking North and South America. It contains the country of Panama and the Panama Canal. Both Britain and the U.S. agreed to use the projected canal as a neutral passage (ibid). In this context, Fiji was envisaged as a possible port of call, between Panama and Australia, and it therefore assumed strategic importance (ibid). As the result, Britain (in accordance with its policy

of minimum intervention), and the U.S. made treaties with *iTaukei* chiefs to station consuls in Fiji (ibid). Following these treaties, John Brown Williams, an American settler, was appointed in June 1857, as the first U.S. consul, while William Thomas Pritchard was appointed as British consul in September of the same year (ibid 136-137). Fiji's importance was further strengthened in the late 1850s as a potential region for cotton production (Ward 1950:188). With the growth of the textile industry in Britain in the 1850s and the establishment of a Cotton Supply Association necessitated the search for new sources of raw cotton (ibid). As such the Foreign Affairs Office instructed its consuls in the South Seas to explore the potential for cotton production in the region. Fiji apparently was singled out as the most lucrative place for cotton production given its availability of large area of arable land (ibid).

In the mid-1850s, and 60s, the prominent chief, and self-proclaimed Tui Viti, or King of Fiji, Ratu Seru Cakobau was confronted, with two major challenges that compelled him to cede Fiji in 1858 to Great Britain. The first, entailed the emerging power of Ma'afu, the Tongan chief, who came to Fiji in 1853 and five years later conquered the eastern part of Fiji, and had assumed the title of the first Tui Lau (Scarr 1984:21-29). The entrenchment of Ma'afu's control in the Lau group, posed as a formidable challenge to Cakobau's hegemonic power in Fiji, and his claim as Tui Viti.

The second was an incident in 1849, that involved the burning of the U.S. consul's home in Nukulau during the celebration of the American Independence Day on July fourth. This led to a series of encounter that Cakobau had with the U.S. Commanders in 1855, 1858 and 1867, who demanded compensation in the burning and looting of the U.S.

Consul's property. The monetary value of the compensation had risen from US\$5001.38 in 1851 to US\$43,000 in 1855 (ibid).

In the early nineteenth century, the island kingdom of Bau had become the most powerful in Fiji (Donnerly, et al 1994:23). By 1830, Bau's influence stretched along the northern and western coast of Viti Levu, and Lomai Viti. The emergence of Bau and its chiefs such as Cakobau were attributable to several factors. The first was the intermarriages between powerful chiefly families of neighboring kingdoms, such as Rewa, Cakaudrove and Lau. These links produced powerful political and military alliances in tribal warfare.

Bau was also known for its huge canoes, that made it possible to intervene in disputes, such as disputes over succession, and as such, won the respect and deference of neighboring kingdoms. Thirdly, Bau's position was enhanced by the continued associations with beachcombers and traders who introduced fire arms and helped in the building up of arms and ammunitions. Cakobau succeeded his father in 1852 and continued the legacy of his forefathers.

Cakobau conquered the powerful kingdoms of Verata and half of Rewa and controlled the eastern and western coasts of Viti Levu, and had assumed the title of the Tui Viti (ibid). However, his power was threatened in 1853 when Ma'afu was appointed by King Taufa'ahau of Tonga, as governor of Tongans in Fiji. Ma'afu immediately established himself as a power in Lau (Scarr 1984: 25-26). He replicated the Wesleyan inspired laws that were used in Tonga, introduced a taxation system, and the individual ownership of land (ibid 27). In 1855 Ma'afu had secured the sovereignty of the northern

Lau and made Lomaloma his home. He subjugated the Kingdom of Bua and Cakaudrove and eventually succeeded, in governing the Northern and Eastern Fiji, into a single confederacy (Derrick 1946: 131).

While Ma'afu was enjoying his rise to power in Lau and Vanua Levu, Cakobau on the other hand, was sickly and his wars, particularly with Rewa was prolonged and difficult (Donnerly et al, 1994:24). In 1854, he ultimately lost his clutch on Rewa, while the tribes of Ovalau revolted against him. His conversion to Christianity in 1854 resulted in the withdrawals of his traditional allies such as Kaba, who did not approve of the new religion (ibid). As such, the people of Kaba and other chiefs who refuse to accept Christianity, joined forces and mount an attack on Cakobau. The old chief appealed to the Tongans for help, and with King Taufa'ahau and Ma'afu fighting on his side, on what was known as the Battle of Kaba, Cakobau routed his enemies and restored the Kingdom of Bau and his hegemonic power in Viti Levu and Lomai Viti (ibid). However, after the Battle of Kaba, Cakobau knew that he was not in any position to challenge his Tongan counterpart who had entrench his control in Northern and Eastern Fiji (ibid 25).

The other important event that played an important role in Fiji's political development was the burning of William Brown's home both in Nukulau and Laucala. Brown was initially the American consular in New Zealand, moved to Fiji in 1840, first as commercial agent for Fiji, and later as U.S. consular in 1849 (Derrick 1946:95). In 1846 Brown and his associates bought Nukulau island for \$30.00, which was paid in muskets, ammunition and trade goods (ibid). In 1849, William and his American friends were celebrating the Fourth of July, when one his canon burst at the touch-hole and caused

fire. Apparently, the fire attracted *iTaukei* who instead of helping to put out the fire, seized what they could and made off with the loot. After the fire, Brown resettled in Laucala island, where his house was again burnt in 1855 by the people of Rewa following their death of their high chief Qaraniqio (ibid 134). Brown subsequently held Cakobau, as King of Fiji, responsible for the looting of his property in 1849 following the fire at his Nukulau residence, as well, as the burning in 1855, of his Laucala home. He therefore appealed to the authorities in Washington to settle the matter (ibid 96; 134).

In 1851 when the U.S.S. *St Mary* visited Fiji, Brown presented Captain Macgruder, a list of articles that he claimed was stolen, which was estimated at US\$5001.38 (ibid 133). This amount was increased to US\$43.531 in 1855 following Brown's second appeal to Commander Boutwell, when the U.S.S. *John Adams* docked in the Fiji waters in the same year (ibid 135; 138-139). The new amount also included the compensation of his house that was burnt in 1855 in his Laucala island, which was burnt by the people of Vutia, in Rewa (ibid). Boutwell summoned Cakobau to the U.S. naval vessel, where he was forced to sign an agreement promising to settle the compensation in two years (ibid 138-139). This was followed up by Commander Sinclair of the corvette *Vandalia* which arrived in Fiji in 1858 to settle the claims fixed in 1855. Cakobau was again forced by Commander Sinclair to sign another document promising to pay within a year (ibid).

This time, Cakobau was eventually given an ultimatum, either to pay in cash, or in blood. Cakobau's inability to challenge Ma'afu was further compounded by the threats levelled at him by U.S. Naval Commanders to settle the American claim.

In 1858, given his inability to challenge Ma'afu's (who helped restore his kingdom), and his incapacity to pay the American debt, which he believed was unscrupulous, Cakobau turned to William Thomas Prichard, the British consular in Fiji, to prepare a formal deed of cession offering Fiji to Great Britain (Derrick 1946: 139; Donnelly et al, 1994:26-27; Drus 1950:87; Ricci 1875: 79). As Derrick puts it:

"In addition to being pressed by the Americans to pay a debt which he felt was unjust, he was haunted by fear of his Tongan deliverer" (1946:140).

Ricci, J.H. de, describes it as follow:

In the year 1858, harassed by a claim of \$45,000 -about 9000 pounds-preferred by Captain Boutwell, on behalf of the United State Government (for which, as Tui Viti, he had, under pressure, made himself responsible), and by the insupportable exactions and tyrannies of the Tongans, under the leadership of Ma'afu, Thakomabau applied to the British consular in Fiji for assistance and advise (1875:79).

Prichard, who has just arrived a few weeks earlier, and an advocate of British colonial expansion in the Pacific, seized the moment and immediately drafted a formal deed of cession, which was signed by Cakobau, and several leading *iTaukei* chiefs on 12th October 1858. The result of this application was a conditional cession to Her Majesty the Queen. In his offer to cede Fiji to the British crown, Cakobau made the following claims.

First, that he was the paramount chief of the Kingdom of Bau and its dependencies, *Vunivalu* (commander in chief) of the armies of Fiji, and Tui Viti (Derrick 1946: 139; Donnelly et al, 1994:27; Drus 1950:87). Second, that he had been recognized, as such, by Britain, France, and the United States (ibid). Third, that he possessed the "full and exclusive sovereignty and dominion" throughout Fiji (ibid).

EBENEZER CAKOBAU, by the grace of God, Sovereign Chief of Bau and its Dependencies, Vunivalu of the Armies of Fiji and Tui Viti...Greeting.

Whereas we, being duly, fully, and formally recognized in our aforesaid state, rank and sovereignty by Great Britain, France, and the United States of America respectively, and having full and exclusive sovereignty and domain in and over the islands and territories constituting, forming, and being included in the group known as Fiji, or Viti (Register No.6, folio 14, in Ricci 1874: 19).

In addition to these claims, Cakobau included three conditions. The first was that in offering to cede the sovereignty of Fiji to Her Majesty, that he retained the rank and title of Tui Viti. Secondly, that he should assume the headship of the Native Department under the Queen's representative, and finally that the British government should fully discharge the U.S. government's claim in the amount of US\$45,000.00 (Derrick 1946:139). In return for the payment of the American debt, that he offered no less than 200,000 acres of land, if required and given over to Her Majesty as crown land (ibid).

Now know ye, that we do hereby, for and in consideration of certain conditions, terms and engagements hereafter set forth, make over, transfer, and convey unto Victoria, by the grace of God, Queen of Great Britain and Ireland, &c. &c. &c; Her heirs and successors for ever, the full sovereignty and domain in and over our aforesaid islands and territories ...

Provided always, and this cession of our sovereignty and our islands and territories is on these conditions, terms, and considerations; that is to say, That the aforesaid Victoria, Queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland aforesaid, shall permit us to retain the title and rank of Tui Viti, in so far as the aboriginal population is concerned, and shall permit us to be at the head of the department for governing the aforesaid aboriginal population, ... that aforesaid Victoria ... shall pay the sum of forty five thousand dollars (\$45,000) unto the President of the United States of America ... For and in consideration of which outlay, not less than two hundred thousand (200,000) acres of land, if required, shall be made over, transferred, conveyed, in fee simple unto Victoria aforesaid ... (ibid).

Four days after the confrontation with Commander Sinclair on the deck of the *Vandalia*, Cakobau, signed the deed of cession in Levuka, on October 12th 1858 and ratified by twenty *iTaukei* chiefs (Derrick 1946:139; Ricci 1875: 23-24). The deed was witnessed by John Smith Fordham, the Wesleyan Missionary, John Binner Wesley Mission Trainer, Robert S. Swanson Hawaii consul in Fiji, and William T. Prichard, Her Britannica Majesty's Consul. Three weeks later, Prichard travelled to London on board the *John Wesley* to urge his government for the acceptance of Cakobau's offer (Derrick 1946:139). Upon his arrival in London, Prichard reported to the Foreign Office and presented Cakobau's offer cession. But Lord Malmesbury, the Foreign Secretary referred him to the Colonial Office, since Fiji, if annexed, would come under that office (Drus 1950:87). He stated that:

... it is rather a question for the Colonial than for the Foreign Secretary of State to consider whether the British Government should accept the cession of a new colony (C.O. 201/510: Minute by Gairdner, 7 April 1859 in Drus 1950:87).

The response of the Colonial Office showed mixed feelings. Herman Merivale, the head of the permanent officials initially expressed reservation to the offer, but was later inclined towards annexation (ibid). Similarly, the Parliamentary-Under-Secretary, Lord Carnarvon after having objected that Fiji would be troublesome and unprofitable to the British Empire, later changed his mind after considering the potential political and economic importance of the islands. It was envisioned in Britain that Fiji could be important as a port of call, between Panama and Australia, besides the possibility of a coaling station (ibid). The islands can be a prized colonial possession given its possible

geo-strategic position in the Pacific Ocean. If this were the case, it would be key in the establishment of British naval power in the Pacific. Further, the islands offered a lucrative cotton-producing region at the time.

Captain John Washington, the Admiralty Hydrographer, strongly favored annexation in view of the absence of any single British base between Canada and Australia (ibid 88). Given the prospect of cotton production in Fiji, the Manchester Cotton Supply Association was strongly in favor of annexation. Support for annexation also came from outside of Britain. The Methodists of New South Wales in Australia, for instance advocated for annexation to restore law and order (Donnelly, et al, 1994: 27). Also, the Wesleyan Missionary Society and the Aborigines Protection Society appealed to the British government to annex Fiji for the protection indigenous populations (ibid). The Legislative Assembly of New South Wales, even voted an address to the Queen in support of the proposed annexation (Ricci 1874: 25). Captain Towns a wealthy Sydney Merchant and ship owner offered to donate \$45,000 to clear any obstacles that might obstruct British annexation of the Islands.

But it was deemed important for the British government to obtain the necessary information before reaching a definitive decision on the question of Fiji. Meanwhile, in 1859 the Conservative Government of Lord Derby II was on shaky ground. Hence, Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton, the Secretary of State for Colonies advised that the question of Fiji be deferred, as the fate of the Derby administration depended on its reform bill (Drus 1950:88). However, Derby II resigned on June 11th, 1859 after a vote of no confidence, and

the question of Fiji, therefore fell on Lord Palmerston, the new Prime Minister under the newly established Liberal Party (ibid).

The question of Fiji was not favorably considered under the Palmerston government, but as Drus argues, it was impolitic to reject Cakobau's offer, given that the Derby government was inclined towards annexation (ibid). As such, it was necessary to send a commissioner to investigate the situation in Fiji and determine if the islands offered economic, political and geo-strategic importance to warrant annexation. For this, Lieutenant Colonel W.J. Smythe was appointed in December 1859, to conduct a special enquiry on Fiji (Ricci 1875: 84). In appointing Smythe, the Secretary of State for the Colonies, the Duke of New Castle outlined his terms of reference as follows:

SIR,

You are aware that you have been selected by me for the delicate and important duty of reporting whether it would be expedient that her Majesty's Government should accept an offer which has been made, to cede to her Majesty the sovereignty over the Fiji Islands, in the Pacific Ocean.

It will be requisite that you should state in full both the advantages and the disadvantages which, in your view, would attend such acceptance, and that you should also advise on what terms and in what manner the acquisition, if decided on, had better be effected (Instructions addressed to Colonel Smythe, Royal Artillery, by His Grace the Duke of New Castle, K.G. Downing Street, December 23, 1859, in Smythe 1864: 191).

The Commission's principal terms of reference required Smythe to firstly, ascertain if Fiji was a useful station for mail steamers running between Panama and Sydney, second to investigate if Fiji was a worthwhile source of cotton production, and

third if Fiji had a geo-strategic position to warrant the establishment of British naval base in the South Pacific (Derrick 1946:144).

The question, therefore, whether or not the Fijis ought to be added to the numerous Colonial Possessions of this country must be determined by the same motives of ordinary expediency which direct the general national policy.

The principal reasons for this class which have been urged for accepting the sovereignty of the Fiji Islands are these: 1st, that they may prove a useful station for any mail steamers running between Panama and Sydney; 2nd, that they may afford a supply of cotton; and 3rd, and in close connection with the first reason, that their possession is important to the national power and security in the Pacific Ocean (Instructions addressed to Colonel Smythe, Royal Artillery, by His Grace the Duke of New Castle, K.G. Downing Street, December 23, 1859, in Smythe 1864:194).

Smythe's account was unfavorable, both in his preliminary findings and final report which were both submitted on May 1st, 1861 (Derrick 1945:147; Drus 1950:90).

In the preliminary report, he informed the British government, that Cakobau was not the sovereign ruler as he claimed, and as such, he neither had the authority to cede the Islands, nor the right to offer the land he promised in his offer of cession. Smythe states that,

In several important points I have found the information furnished by Mr. Prichard to her Majesty's Government and embodied in my instructions incorrect. Thakombau (Vunivalu of Bau) has no claim to the title of Fiji. There is, in fact, no such title; he is only one, although probably the most influential of the numerous independent chiefs of Fiji, and has consequently no power to cede the sovereignty of the entire group to Her Majesty. He is of an ambitious disposition and his objects seems to be, through the assistance of England, to become the ruler of Fiji, and to be protected at the same time from France and the United States of America, of both which Powers he has great apprehensions (Colonel Smythe, Royal Artillery, to his Grace The Duke Of Newcastle, K.G. May 1st, 1861 in Smythe 1864: 199).

In his final Report, Smythe indicated that notwithstanding British initial calculation of Fiji as a possible port of call between Panama and Sydney, Fiji is a longer route between Panama and Sydney, in comparison to Auckland, New Zealand. Smythe reports that Fiji is 359 miles longer than the route via Auckland. Besides, the navigation of Fiji waters, is difficult due to its reefs, as well as, Fiji's susceptibility to hurricanes.

The distance ... from Sydney to Panama is 7, 626 nautical miles. The distance from Sydney to Fiji is 1, 735 miles, and from Fiji to Panama 6, 250 miles, making the distance from Sydney to Panama by way of Fiji 7, 985 miles, or 359 miles longer ... The route by Fiji, besides being the longer, traverses the Pacific archipelagoes, the navigation among which is undoubtedly difficult and dangerous, from the reefs and shoals in which they abound, and the occurrences of hurricanes at certain seasons (ibid).

The issue of ascertaining the economic viability of Fiji, as a cotton producing space was an important component of Smythe's mission. In his instruction to Smythe, the Colonial Secretary, emphasized its importance in the context of British economic interests:

Secondly with regard to the supply of cotton. There is no question of the present day affecting the use to be made of our Foreign Possessions for encouraging and supporting the industry of our country, in which the community in general feel so great an interest as this. To add to the fields from whence that supply is now derived is one of the highest economical objects to which Her Majesty's Government can supply themselves. Any indication of such field is to be carefully followed up.

To this branch of the subject, therefore you will devote your special and most solicitous attention (Instructions addressed to Colonel Smythe, Royal Artillery, by His Grace the Duke of New Castle, K.G. Downing Street, December 23, 1859, in Smythe 1864: 194-195).

Smythe reported that despite the ideal climatic condition for cotton production, Fiji, was disadvantaged by two things. The first was the complexity of land tenure, and the second

entailed the indolence of the natives. With regard, to the former, the natives were opposed to individual acquisition of property, and hence they did not respect the principle of private property rights. Experiences have shown, that white settlers who 'bought' land, had had the same taken away, at the whims of native chiefs. In the latter, natives did not possess due diligence, or industry, and were not inclined towards the routine nature of plantation economies.

Smythe reported that, Fiji, under these circumstances, cannot be considered a significant source of cotton to Her Majesty's Government.

The general habits and sentiments of the Fijians are opposed to the acquisition of private property by individuals ... It is very doubtful, however, whether the people will become more industrious, their wants being so few, and being so easily supplied. Although capable of making a considerable exertion for a short period, the natives dislike regular and continuous employment.

On the whole, I am of the opinion that whether by natives or by white planters with native labourers, the supply of cotton from Fiji can never be otherwise than insignificant (Colonel Smythe, Royal Artillery, to his Grace The Duke Of Newcastle, K.G. May 1st, 1861 in Smythe 1864: 207).

The issue of ascertaining the geo-strategic value of the Fiji Islands, was important to determine the possible establishment of British naval and military hegemony in the western Pacific Ocean. In his report, Smythe asserted that the possession of Australia and New Zealand in the Pacific, provided England the military and naval hegemony in the western Pacific. Hence, Fiji is not only redundant geo-strategically, but it would be an embarrassment in the event of war, including all other islands in the western Pacific.

Smythe went on to state that the geographical location of the Fiji Islands fell outside of major trading routes between Panama and North America or China and India.

By the possession of Australia and New Zealand England completely commands the western portion of the Pacific. In these colonies naval armaments can be recruited and equipped, and perhaps in a few years may even be created. No group in the Pacific can ever offer these advantages, and the possession of one, in the western section more especially, is not only required, but it would be a source of embarrassment in the event of war.

The Fiji Islands do not lie in the path of any great commercial route. The whole of the Pacific archipelagoes lie to the north of the direct line from the Australian colonies to Panama and South American to China and India (ibid 207).

Apart from the three major terms of reference discussed above, Smythe instructions also included an investigation into three other aspects pertaining to the Fiji Islands.

This entailed the extent to which the colonial authority, if instituted, could eradicate cannibalism and other inhuman practices by the native. The other is to determine the probable cost of government in the event of annexation, and finally to investigate the system of land tenure, and its bearing on the 200,000 acres of land offered to Her Majesty by Cakobau.

There is another point which it is necessary that you should not overlook. Public opinion in England will not consent to the toleration in any British territory of any of those inhuman practices among the natives to which I have already referred. It will therefore necessary to consider, with the care which so important a question demands, whether the local Government, if constituted, can at once interpose its authority, in aid of the efforts of the Missionaries, to suppress these practices.

You will also have to consider what the first expenses of the Government are likely to be, especially if some display of force is requisite for the above purpose, and also for keeping order between Europeans and

natives, and how soon, and in what manner, the local resources may be expected to afford a revenue for these and other purposes.

Although we have not full information regarding the native usage of property, yet it would appear from Mr. Prichard's evidence that a kind of private ownership is recognized over almost all the soil, insomuch that the presumed sovereign has little land at his disposal. The utmost, it is said, which the king of the group can offer to convey to the Crown of England, if the sovereignty over the Islands be accepted, is a tract of 200,000 acres, which, of course, be very inadequate for purposes of European settlement. But it remained to be ascertained how much of the soil, said to be owned by individual natives or native families, is in reality unoccupied, what right and disposition the so called owners of unoccupied land might have to part with it, to European settlers, or to the Crown, in trust for purposes of colonization; how far resettlement of Europeans, especially on scattered districts, among a people such as the natives of Fiji, might be advisable (ibid).

Regarding the native population, Smythe reported that cannibalism existed at a formidable rate, together with other barbaric practices such as strangulation of widows and infanticide. The suppression of such practices, Smythe reported, required a whole brigade, and a war ship. But, such swift act would be ineffective in the long run. The solution to the cannibalistic and ferocious behavior of the natives, Smythe reported, would be better dealt with through the civilizing mission of the missionaries.

Of the native population of Fiji ... cannibalism, strangulation of windows, infanticide, and other enormities prevail to a frightful extent. Should the sovereignty of the Islands be accepted by Her Majesty, the suppression of these inhuman practices would be put into immediate execution. For this service, and for the general support of the Government, a force of not less than the wing of a regiment would be required, in addition to a ship of war, with attender of light draught, both steamers ...

Looking solely at the interests of civilization, the forcible and immediate suppression of the barbarous practices of the heathen population might appear a very desirable act; yet beneficial influence on the native character, it might prove less real and permanent than the more gradual operation of missionary teaching (ibid 208).

On the issue of cost, Smythe reported, that the establishment of an effective colonial administration would be approximately seven thousand pounds. However, Smythe cautioned that the means of revenue collection was limited, and this would necessitate tax in kind, since the natives did not have a circulating medium of exchange. As such, it would take time, before Fiji could establish a self-sustaining economy.

The expenses of a Civil Establishment composed on a sufficient scale to act efficiently on the condition of the natives would probably not fall short of 700 pounds a year.

The only mode of raising a revenue would appear to be by capitation tax; custom duties would be so small as not to cover the cost of collection, ... For many years the Government would be necessitated to accept the tax in kind, as natives have no circulating medium of exchange; and a still longer period would elapse before the Islands became self-supporting (ibid).

Given the unimportance of Fiji as a viable coaling station between Panama and Sydney, and its insignificance as a prospective cotton producing country, together with the absence of geo-strategic value, Smythe, advised the British government, that Fiji was not valuable, or “not expedient” to annex. Besides, the nature of barbarism that existed amongst the natives, would incur unnecessary cost, let alone the establishment of an effective colonial government. In his advice, Smythe said the following:

On a review of foregoing considerations, and the conclusions derived from a personal examination of the islands and the people, I am of the

opinion that it would not be expedient that Her Majesty's Government should accept the offer which has been made, to cede to Her Majesty the sovereignty over the Fiji Islands (ibid 209).

Smythe's report was received at the British Colonial Office on 17 August 1871 and upon his advice the Colonial Secretary of State, the Duke of New Castle, rejected Cakobau's offer of cession on behalf of Her Majesty's Government. However, it is important to note, that officials in the British Colonial Office had unanimously opposed to the proposal for annexation prior to receiving Smythe's final report (Drus1950:89; Derrick 1946:146). This was due to the advice provided by Sir William Dennison, the governor of New South Wales, in Australia. Dennison alluded first to the indiscretion committed by Prichard, British consular in Fiji, for preempting the annexation of Fiji, by way of advertising Fiji as a potential British settlement with a lucrative agricultural economy (ibid). Apparently, Prichard wrote letters and notices in the colonial newspapers which attracted British settlers to Fiji in search of pastoral land, while some came to escape the ravages of the Maori wars in New Zealand (ibid). Such action was considered unauthorized by the British government.

Secondly, and more importantly, Governor Denison also drew the attention of the British Colonial Office to the wars and bloodshed in New Zealand as the result of conflict between Maoris and colonialists. Governor Denison advised that any attempt to secure British power in Fiji would not only incur unnecessary cost to the British crown, but also, it would lead to even more violent conflict in the Pacific (Drus 1950:89). Consequently, when Smythe's final report was received, the Colonial Office found it redundant to

further discuss the question of Fiji and accordingly rejected, Cakobau's offer of cession. The Foreign Office concurred with the decision. The following was an exchange of memorandums between the Undersecretaries of the Colonial and Foreign Office on the question of Fiji:

Sir,

I am directed by the Duke of New Castle to transmit to you, to be laid before Earl Russel, the copy of a letter from Colonel Smythe, together with his report, on the expediency of accepting, on the part of her Majesty's Government an offer which has been made to cede to Her Majesty the sovereignty over the Fiji Islands in the Pacific Ocean.

The statements made by Colonel Smythe, in his clear and interesting report, together with other considerations suggested by the native war in which this country is now menaced in New Zealand, appears to his Grace to establish conclusively the impolicy of appropriating these islands

His Grace is of the opinion that any Civilized Power who may make itself responsible for the government of the Fiji Islands must also be willing to incur a large and immediate expenditure, with the possibility before long of finding itself involve in native wars, and possible disputes with civilized countries (Sir Frederic Rogers, Bart, to E. Hammond Esq; Downing Street, September 7, 1861 in Henderson 16:1935)).

Sir,

I have laid before Earl Russel your letter of the 7th instant enclosing Colonel Smythe's report on the Fiji Islands, and I am directed by his Lordship to request that you will inform the Duke of New Castle that Lord Russel concurs with his Grace in opinion that it will not be expedient to accept the sovereignty of those islands (Letter from E. Hammond, Esq, to the Under Secretary of State, Foreign Office, September 19, 1861 in Smythe 210: 1864).

The British government's decision was conveyed to Cakobau through Sir John Young, the Governor of New South Wales. This was in accordance with the recommendation

made by the British Foreign Secretary, Lord Russel. In his letter to the Governor of New South Wales, the Duke of New Castle wrote as follows:

Lord Russel considers that, from your position as Governor of New South Wales, you are the most fitting person to assume the direction of the inquiry to be instituted, and proper medium for communicating to the chiefs of Fiji the regret of her Majesty's Government that the sovereignty of intended cannot be accepted (Extract The Duke of New Castle to Sir Robert Young, in Ricci 1874: 39).

Young sent Captain Jenkins on HMS *Miranda* and who after reaching Fiji on July 1862, delivered the message to Cakobau with due courtesy and ceremony. Afterwards, the *Miranda* travelled around Fiji to inform other Fijian chiefs (who were signatories to the 1858 offer of cession) of the decision of the British government. As such, the question of Fiji was settled, at least temporarily. Meanwhile, for his indiscretion, Prichard, the British consular in Fiji, was dismissed in January 1863, and was replaced by Thurston in an acting capacity, until Consular E. March assumed the position on a substantive capacity (Derrick 1946: 154; Donnelly et al 1994:28).

The Polynesian Company and the Multiple Petitions for Annexation

In 1868, Thurston, the acting British consular was agitated by a transaction between the Polynesian Company, and Cakobau which resulted in the granting of 200,000 acres of land, to the former, including banking and trading rights (Drus 1950: 91). In the previous year Captain Stanley of the U.S.S. Tuscarora harassed Cakobau once again pressuring him to settle the American claim, or face American reprisal (Derrick 1946:177). This time Cakobau was forced to sign another document promising to pay the claims in four annual installments, and agreeing to pay the first installment in May 1868. To this

end, Cakobau rendered the islands of Nairai, Batiki and Moturiki as collateral (ibid). Having learnt of this arrangement through General Latham, the U.S. consul in Melbourne, a group of businessmen in Sydney established the Polynesian Company with the objective of negotiating a charter with Cakobau (ibid). The charter entailed a preparation whereby the Polynesian company would settle the U.S. claims and receiving in return 200,000 acres of land, together with trading and banking rights (ibid).

The land in question was initially offered to the British government should it agree to annex Fiji and fully discharge the American claim (*Proposal of Cession No.1* in Ricci 1875:81). To make a compelling case, the representatives of the company, Brewer and Evans, arrived in Levuka the day the first installment was due, with a charter, and presented it to Cakobau. In desperation, Cakobau signed the charter on May 23rd, and hence, relieved himself from the burden of the American claims.

Apparently, the Polynesian Company had exploited Cakobau's desperation and got itself 200,000 acres of land. In his protest, Thurston asserted, that the land Cakobau ceded to the company belonged to an independent tribe, that would never have consented to its own dispossession. He subsequently appealed to the British government for redress (Drus 1850:91). As the result of the British government's intervention, Cakobau withdrew his consent and the Polynesian Company modified the Charter to placate British authority. Also, the company signed an agreement with the U.S. vice-consul, accepting full responsibility of the American claims. Under the new Charter, however, the Polynesian Company was only able to claim less than 500 acres of land, mostly around Suva harbor (Derrick 1946: 181).

Shortly after the Polynesian Company saga, Edward March was appointed as the British substantive consul in December 1868 (Derrick 1946:193). Meanwhile, the close of the 1860s also witnessed the increasing arrivals of Europeans into Fiji. Business boomed in the townships of Levuka, the Rewa Delta, Taveuni and Lomaloma (ibid 185). With the unscrupulous saga of the Polynesian company and the potential for similar practices, Consul March and leading white settlers together with *iTaukei* chiefs recognized the need for annexation (Drus 1950:91). Besides, the influx of European settlers (in late 1860's and early 1870's) together with the establishment of the capitalist economic system, necessitated the creation of law and order, to protect the interests of both European settlers as well as, *iTaukei* (Ricci 1875:89).

European settlers were constantly raided and their property vandalized by disgruntled *iTaukei*, who had had their land dispossessed in favor of European settlers (Derrick 192:1946). In fact, the extent of land alienation in the 1860s for cotton production had angered a group of *iTaukei* chiefs, and there were fears of organized attacks against white settlers (ibid). According to the Fiji Times dated on 18th September 1869:

Not only are the Fijians formidable in number, but they are well armed, and if anything could unite them as a people it would be the hope of regaining their lands in a general attack on the white (quoted in Derrick 1946:192).

By the close of the 1860s, the situation in Fiji was politically and economically volatile (ibid). With the absence of an effective government to administer law and order, Fiji was on the verge of a breaking point. As such, on the 14th of June, 1869 Cakobau and Ma'afu approved of a public meeting which was held in Levuka by *iTaukei* chiefs and white

settlers. The meeting was to consider petitioning the British government to contemplate taking Fiji as a protectorate (ibid).

The meeting resolved that given Fiji's political volatility, it was imperative that the British government considered the islands as protectorate for a period of either ten, or fifteen, or even twenty years (ibid). It was further resolved that under the duration of the protectorate-ship, that permission be granted to leading *iTaukei* chiefs and competent foreign residents to cultivate an effective form of government to ensure law and order (ibid). Cakobau, Maafu, and a hundred and twenty white residents signed the petition.

The following is a copy of the petition to the British Foreign Office:

To the Right Hon. The Earl of Clarendon,

Her Majesty Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

The memorial of the undersigned Native Chiefs and Foreign resident of Fiji humbly sheweth -

That a public meeting held at Levuka, Ovalau, Fiji, on the 14th June last to consider the expediency of memorializing the American or some other Government, with the object of inducing it to take this Group of Islands under its protection, it was proposed and carried out by a large and influential majority, that the present condition of Fiji renders it imperative upon this community, essentially British in conjunction with the dominant chiefs to at once memorialize the British Government, praying it to grant Fiji protection for ten, fifteen, or twenty years, in order that -since annexation to the Crown is opposed to the policy of Her Majesty's Government- the Native Chiefs, with the assistance of competent Foreign residents may be permitted and assisted to cultivate a form of Government analagous to that of Sandwich Islands.

Your memorialists pray your lordship may dwell upon the large and increasing connection with the Australian colonies, and the apparent necessity for providing due protection alike to settlers and natives. In the event of Her Majesty's Government entertaining this petition, your lordship's memorialists pledge themselves to accept all the obligations

Her Maesty's Government may deem it wise or necessary to impose,
and your lordship's memorialists as in duty bound will pray,
THAKOBAU, King of Bau, for himself and family
By local Chief opposite
Ma'afu King of Lau, for Tui Bua and Tui Cakau
And One hundred and twenty white residents (Fiji Times, Saturday 30,
1870).

Meanwhile, a group consisting of a significant number of the white residents also petitioned for a U.S protectorate, which was signed and circulated for signatures in Levuka, Melbourne and Sydney (Ricci 1874:46; Derrick 1946:192). The petition was endorsed by the American vice-consul in Fiji, with a total of one hundred and ten signatures, seventy in Levuka, and forty from white folks in Sydney and Melbourne (ibid). In the petition, American settlers emphasized Fiji's geo-strategic location, both as a coaling station and a naval base in American interests. Economically the petitioners highlighted the economic prospects in cotton, sugar and coconut oil production and its potential benefits to the U.S. economy. Fiji's cotton was particularly highlighted as the best in the world. The following is an excerpt from the petition:

Fiji, 1869, - To the Honorable the President of the United States of America.
Sir, - 1. You are aware of the political and social condition of the group of the Fiji Islands, the residents of which, many of them American, but most of them British, begin to feel the want of the protection of some powerful nations, as well for the purpose of maintaining their position with the native authorities, as for outward security in their trade and commerce ... 5. We therefore, the undersigned subscribers, being composed, firstly of residents in the group, and secondly, of others who have identified our fortunes with it, earnestly pray that you will, at an early date, announce to the world your resolve to extend the protection of your flag to these islands and waters permanently. 6. The geographical position of the group in the South Pacific Ocean points to it as being a suitable naval and coaling station in American interests. 7 ... 8. The exquisite climate of the Fijis, with their valuable productions such as

cotton (none finer in the world) sugar, cocoa-nut oil, naturally leads reflecting and enterprising men to look forward to these islands as becoming a desirable residence for both Americans and Europeans, ... 9. We therefore again earnestly express the hope that the prayer of this petition for the protection of the American flag (under our own system of self-government) may be answered in the affirmative. – We have the honor to be, Sir, your most obedient servants (*The Melbourne Papers* in Ricci 1875:47-48).

The British Government, did not respond to the petition (Ward 1950: 247). In view of the New Zealand experience, the Secretary of Foreign Affairs, the Earl Granville was unwilling to assume any responsibility of the Fiji Islands (Derrick 1946: 193). Nevertheless, the Foreign Office, after having learnt of the petition to the United States, appealed to the Colonial Office to protect British interests in Fiji (ibid). Apparently, inquiries placed in Washington, proved that the United States government had no intention of establishing a protectorate over Fiji (ibid). The following correspondences between the Colonial Office and Foreign Affairs Office revealed the British and U.S. responses to the above petitions.

Sir,

I am directed by Earl Granville to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 31st of December, respecting a petition addressed to the President of the United States, inviting the protectorate of the United States Government in the Fiji Islands.

Lord Granville desires me to request that you will inform Lord Clarendon that, in his opinion, it is not desirable for this country to take responsibility of government of the Fiji Islands (*The Colonial Office to the Foreign Office*, 4th February 1870 in Ricci 1874:48).

Despite the reluctance of the British and the U.S. Governments, German settlers, appealed to Bismarck for a Prussian protectorate over Fiji, to which Bismarck courteously

declined in October 1869 (Drus 1950: 94). Offers made to France was also declined (A Pamphlet to White Residents of Fiji, in Ricci 1875: 66). It shows that, Fiji, in the eyes of the British and other colonial powers was not a place to be desired. Derrick puts it as follows: "... the Colonial Office saw no good reason for a new colony in the Pacific" (1946:145). Similarly, Drus observes: "... it became quite plain that no foreign power was anxious to annex a territory that Britain herself found so unattractive" (1950:94).

Notwithstanding the reluctance of foreign powers, the Australian colonies took up a second appeal for annexation, urging the British government to take responsibility of Fiji (Ricci 1875: 93). This was endorsed during the Intercolonial Conference of Premiers held in Melbourne on June 20, 1870 and historian professor John Dumore Lang was asked to draft the petition (ibid). The petition, emphasized the commercial and political importance of the Fijian Islands, as a lucrative agricultural place for inter-tropical trade with the Australian Colonies, and as a settler colony for white British subjects. The petition also contained a stern warning to the British Government that Fiji could be annexed by another colonial power. The Governor of New South Wales, the Viscount of Canterbury presented the petition by the Australian colonies to the Secretary of State on August 12, 1870. The petition was presented with two additional documents, namely the cover letter from the Governor, and an article from the Sydney Morning Herald, dated August 13 1870. The following is an excerpt of the petition itself, written by Dr. Lang:

1. That the Fiji Islands, one of the groups of the Western Pacific Ocean, have for years past, but especially of late, been attracting much attention on the part of the inhabitation of the Australian colonies, as being a peculiarly eligible field for commercial enterprises as well for the settlement of a people of British origin, for the growth of inter

tropical productions, the land being exceedingly fertile and the climate highly salubrious.

5. That the occupation of the Fiji Islands by any foreign power in Christendom would be extremely detrimental to British interests in the Pacific Ocean, as well as, calamitous in a very high degree to this colony, with which, from its geographical position and vicinity as well as from the common origin of their European inhabitants, these islands will always be intimately connected.

7. Trusting therefore that this honorable house will take this matter of extreme urgency into immediate consideration, and to whatever in your wisdom may facilitate the establishment of a regular government in the Fiji Islands, your petitioner as duty bound will ever pray, &c; &c; &c.

(Petition for British Protectorate of the Fijis, from the Viscount of Canterbury to the Earl Granville, August 12th, 1870 in Ricci 1875: 98-99).

The *Sydney Morning Herald* article highlighted the subject of absconding defaulters who have sought asylum in the Fiji Islands (ibid 95-96). The newspaper, labelled such unprincipled behavior, as a serious risk to the commercial interests of the Australian colonies. It therefore urged the British Government the need to establish a regular government, that would amongst other things, institute extradition arrangement, to deal with absconders (ibid). The following is an excerpt from the *Sydney Morning Herald*:

A very serious fact becoming more distinct in our commercial and social risks, as well as affecting that sense of responsibility which is often the substitute for honesty of principle. Within the last few months of succession of defaulters, some liable of charges for embezzlement, and others for carrying off property of their creditors, have escaped from the colony ...

We understand an increasing number of this class of men are becoming settlers at the Fijis. A warrant of course, only runs within the dominions of a regular government, and even the practice of extradition is rarely carried beyond the arrest of persons charged with

felony. There is therefore no remedy possible, so long as there is no recognized government.

There are three courses open to the British Government and to the inhabitants of the Fijis, to accept the sovereignty of these islands, or some of them, ... ; or to confer some charter of incorporation which may contain the power of self-government on the European population, and which will make them amendable to laws administered among themselves (*Sydney Morning Herald* 13th August 1870 in Ricci 1875:95-96).

In his cover memorandum to the petition, the Viscount of Canterbury, impressed upon the British Government of the growing importance of in trade and commerce between the Fijian Islands, and the Australian Colonies. The Governor also warned the British Government, that the annexation of Fiji by other foreign powers would be politically and economically detrimental to the Australian colonies:

Your Lordship is well aware that, for some time past, the interest felt by the Australian Colonies in the development of the resources, and in the civilization and the security of the Fijian Islands, has been considerable and rapidly increasing.

And I should state to your Lordship that, within the last few months, or I might even say weeks, new symptoms have been apparent of largely extended commercial intercourse with these islands.

... and the establishment by any foreign government of supreme authority there would naturally and necessarily be distasteful, and prejudicial commercially in time of peace to the Australian Possessions of the Crown ... (*The Viscount of Canterbury to the Earl Granville*, August 12, 1870 in Ricci 1874:93).

However, this petition was also rejected. The British Government feared the potential armed conflict with the natives, should British hegemony be established in the Fijian Islands, as it was with the case of New Zealand following the ratification in 1840 of the Treaty of Waitangi. In any case, the British were unwilling to deal militarily with any

armed conflicts with *iTaukei* in the Fijian Islands. While the British Government recognized the changing circumstances occurring in Fiji since the rejection of the 1858 offer of cession, its position on Fiji remained unchanged.

The British Government, however, suggested to increase the power of the British consul in Fiji in the maintenance of law and order. In his reply to the Governor of New South Wales, the new Secretary of State for Colonies, The Earl Kimberly, wrote the following:

Her Majesty's Government have carefully considered the memorandum of your advisers. The state of affairs in the Fijis appears to have so far changed since 1860, when a full inquiry by Colonel Smythe who was sent out for that purpose, Her Majesty's Government determined not to annex the islands ... but, otherwise, the same difficulties remain.

The islands are under the jurisdiction of several chiefs; even if they all concurred in act of cession to the Queen, the experience of other colonies show that dispute would be sure afterwards to arise especially as to the occupation of land by settlers. It would be impossible for this country to undertake the responsibility of the government of the islands without a sufficient force to support its authority, and Her Majesty's Government are not prepared to station a military force for this purpose in the Fijis. On these grounds Her Majesty's Government cannot depart from their former decision, not to extend British sovereignty over the islands (*The Earl of Kimberly to the Viscount of Canterbury, 16th March 1871* in Ricci 1874:100).

The Question of Fiji, Gunboat Diplomacy, and Annexation

The period between 1870 and 1874 was the most turbulent in Fiji's pre-colonial history (Derryck 1945. As earlier discussed this was due to a number, of factors such as the increased number of white settlers who had arrived in Fiji, internal conflicts and political disunity within white and *iTaukei* communities, *iTaukei* agitation against large-

scale land alienation, the inability of the Cakobau Government to enforce law and order, and its eventual collapse in 1873. It was under these circumstances that the final appeal for annexation came once again from the Australian Colonies and J.B Thurston the Chief Secretary under the Cakobau Government (Ward 1945:242). In January 27th, 1873, Sir Hercules Robinson, the Governor of New South Wales urged the British Government to take decisive action on Fiji. On January 31st Thurston cabled to the British Government and asked:

Will H.M. Government entertain a proposal from the Government of Fiji to cede the Kingdom to Her Britannic Majesty, if its King and People once more and through the King's responsible advisers express a desire to place themselves under Her Majesty's rule? (quoted in Ward 1950:243).

As the result, the question on Fiji was reexamined once more in the House of Commons. In June 1873, William McArthur, (M.P) renewed the demand for the extension of British rule to the Fijian Islands (ibid 246). He wrote:

That, as the Chiefs of Fiji and the white residents therein have signified their desire that Great Britain should assume the protectorate or sovereignty of those Islands, it is desirable that H.M. Government, in order to put an end to the condition of things now existing in the Group, should take steps to carry into effect one or other of these measures (Hansard's Parliamentary Debates, London 1873: 934).

In his address McArthur, stated that Colonel Smythe, (by then Major General) who reported negatively on Fiji had changed his mind. According to the 1873 Hansard Parliamentary debates, McArthur said that Major General Smythe had:

... stated that the condition of affairs had undergone such change that he was now of the opinion that our best course would be to accept the offer of sovereignty of the group which had been made by the Chiefs (ibid 940).

McArthur went on to urge the British Government to annex Fiji, who argued that annexation would benefit British enterprise and the Imperial Government given Fiji's geo-strategic and economic importance (ibid 941). According to the 1873 Hansard Report McArthur said that:

On that occasion he pointed out that the Fiji Islands occupied one of the most important positions in the Pacific; that in the opinion of the high naval authorities no better station for our ships of war was to be found in the great highway between America and Australia; that the Islands were exceedingly fertile, producing all kinds of tropical fruits, and that they were the natural home of the cotton plant, which could be cultivated to almost any extent; ... With regard to commercial advantages, it was obviously important for us to have station on the great highway between British Columbia and San Francisco on the one side, and Australia on the other. The exports and imports of Fiji had steadily increased, their value being 50,000 in 1869; 90,000 in 1870; upwards of 120,000 in 1871 and upwards of 300,000 in 1872 (ibid 935 & 938).

In response to McArthur's motion Prime Minister Gladstone agreed to establish a commission to further investigate the situation in Fiji. In August 15, 1874, E.L. Layard Fiji's new consul, and Commodore James Goodenough, a senior naval officer on the Australian station, were given an extra task, as commissioners to report on the situations in Fiji (Ward 1950:248). The two were commissioned to investigate the feasibility and desirability of four things (ibid): (i) the investiture with magisterial powers over British subjects in the Islands; (ii) to investigate the desirability of recognizing the de-facto government; and (iii) the establishment of protectorate; and (iv) annexation, - the

assumption by Great Britain of sovereignty over Fiji (Brookes 1941:384). The instructions concluded with the explicit statement that the British Government was:

not only far from desiring any increase of British territory, but (it) would regard the extension of British sovereignty to Fiji as a measure which could in no case be adopted unless it were proved to be the only means of escape from evils for which this country might be justly held to be bound to provide an adequate remedy (ibid).

Goodenough arrived earlier in Fiji, since he travelled from Australia where is was stationed, while E.L. Layard, arrived few weeks later from Britain as the new British consul to Fiji. Goodenough's arrival in Fiji put in motion a series of negotiations that were conducted in an undiplomatic manner. He used gunboat diplomacy as opposed to the practices of naval justice (Samson 1998:4-5). British naval power had been a conspicuous characteristic of British presence in the Islands of the Pacific, and Fiji was no exception (ibid). It had become the representative of British authority, which had tasked itself, with the responsibility of supervising the activities of British subjects, while gesturing towards the protection of indigenous people of the Islands (ibid 159).

However, in her book *Imperial Benevolence: the making British authority in the Pacific Islands* 1998, Jane Samson interrogated such authority. "What was British authority" she asked, and "how did the Royal Navy attempt to create it"? (ibid 3). Samson provided an insight from Ward's analysis, that "matters of island government (were) ... effectively coerced, where necessary, by British men-of-war" (ibid 4). This was reflected in Goodenough's militant behavior in negotiating cession with Cakobau, his advisor John Bates Thurston, and other leading *iTaukei* Chiefs (ibid 159).

Meanwhile, the Cakobau government had been ineffective in creating law and order. As such, the Royal Navy became an important source of good order (ibid). In an attempt, to reinvigorate the settler government, Cakobau and Thurston promulgated a new constitution in October 1873 (Ward 1950:252). When Commodore Goodenough arrived in November 1873, he found that both Cakobau and Thurston were no longer interested in British annexation (ibid; Brookes 1941: 387). It appears that their objective was to revitalize the settler government, rather than engage in the negotiation for British annexation. It was pointed out that Thurston's cable on January 31st, was merely to ask the British Government if it could entertain another offer of cession from the Fijian chiefs, but no such offer had been made. In his militant behavior Goodenough denounce the new constitution and warned British subjects not to support, and therefore effectively sabotaged the rejuvenation of the settler government (Ward 1950:252).

Thurston appealed to Goodenough on several occasions to explain the legitimacy of the existing settler government under Cakobau, and the right of natives and British settlers to establish mixed government with, (Samson 1998:164). In one of his responses to Thurston, Goodenough stated that in the interest of the good order and good government of these islands, his views alone should prevail (ibid).

As Samson observes:

For Goodenough, a man more interested in order than in law and swayed by notions of heroic naval intervention, such technicalities were overruled by higher moral imperatives that only he was qualified to interpret (ibid).

He treated Cakobau and his fellow chiefs like “recalcitrant children” (ibid 167). Goodenough warned Cakobau that, “You will get into trouble” Goodenough warned Cakobau, “if you do not come to us to consult with us (ibid). Cakobau’s response was firm:

This country does not belong to foreigners. It is true foreigners have taught us writing but no one has taught us Fijians chiefs whether to give up our country or not (ibid).

Goodenough’s abrasive disposition made Cakobau and Thurston more resolved to obstruct any negotiation for cession (ibid). In March 1874, Cakobau and other leading *iTaukei* chiefs, unanimously agreed to reject British rule over the Fijian Islands, and to support the settler government (Samson 1998:167; Ward 1950: 252). The refusal of the *iTaukei* chiefs to cede Fiji to the British Crown rendered the role of British Commissioners redundant (Ward 1959:252). The only responsibility left was to investigate the desirability of according formal recognition to the settler government under Cakobau (ibid). In response, the Commissioners made a direct appeal to *iTaukei* chiefs to cede the Fijian Islands to Great Britain (Samson 1998:167). Acting beyond their scope of instructions Goodenough and Layard advocated annexation to *iTaukei* chiefs:

It is no new thing for England to govern islands like Fiji. She owns and governs-in several parts of the world-a great number of similar islands to Fiji, and it will be very easy for her to govern Fiji also, and preserve its peace, and promote the welfare and prosperity of its people (quoted in Ward 1950:253).

They were further warned that the continued influx of whites would make it more difficult for the settler government to rule Fiji (ibid). After persistent pressure, the commissioners persuaded Cakobau and the chiefs of Fiji to cede the islands to Great Britain (ibid 255). As a result, an offer of cession was made on March 21, 1874 (ibid 255). Aboard HMS 'Pearl' Cakobau and the *iTaukei* chiefs in a letter to the British Commissioners, stated their desire to cede their Islands with a series of conditions to be met by the British Government. The condition ranges from state allowances for Cakobau and his chiefs, principles of hereditary to traditional titles, the protection of the chiefs and their people, the inclusion of *iTaukei* representatives in the Executive Council of the colonial government, assumption of financial liabilities and the recognition of *iTaukei* ownership of land and. Excerpts from the offer of cession, including the letter from Cakobau and other leading *iTaukei* chiefs, as well as, Thurston's covering letter to the British Commissioners, are as follows:

We, and the Chiefs of Fiji. We have reconsidered your letter, which was brought. Sirs, to us by Mr. Thurston, on the 2nd of January last. And we now tell you, Sirs, that we desire to cede the Government of our kingdom to the Queen of Britain and that the document which I formerly told Mr. Thurston to prepare, be the agreement of the cession. This is all Sirs we have to say to you. Signed Cakobau

GENTLEMEN, In accordance with the tenor of the King's Letter to you, signed on board the Her Majesty's Ship 'Pearl' upon the 21st ultimo, and with his commands to me, I beg to enclose the conditions upon which His Majesty- for himself and people-offers to cede the government of his kingdom to Her Britannic Majesty. I have, &c. (Signed) John B. Thurston, Chief Secretary Coomodore J. G. Goodenough, R.N; Commanding the Australian Station; Edgar Leopold Layard, esq;
Her Britannic Majesty's Consul, Fiji and Tonga

Conclusion

Commodore Goodenough and E.L. Layard's report to the British Government did not indicate Cakobau and his fellow chiefs' refusal to British annexation, nor did it indicate the cajoling and militant tactics of the Commodore in the negotiation for cession. This renders the humanitarian and benevolence discourse deeply questionable. Consequently, it brought into question the argument that British colonization was a humanitarian and benevolent act. The questions are: (i) why was it important to annex Fiji, at least to the Commodore and the members of the Conservative Government who were elected at around the same time the negotiation was taking place? (ii) What was it that Prime Minister Disraeli, Foreign Secretary Lord Derby and Colonial Secretary Lord Carnarvon, saw in Fiji? (iii) Why didn't the British Government dismiss the Commodore and the newly appointed British consul for going beyond the scope of their responsibilities in advocating for annexation? The British Government fired consul Prichard in 1862 for precisely doing the same thing that Goodenough and Layard did in 1874. Why was not the Gladstone Government, not keen on territorial expansion? What was the connection between the British commissioners and Robinson on the one hand, and Disraeli, Derby and Carnarvon, on the other?

It is clear, that the procrastination in the annexation of Fiji by the British Government was not because of the absence of its geo-strategic importance or its commercial utility, but rather in the ideological differences between British political parties on the idea of territorial expansion. As such the discussion on Fiji's annexation

should not focus on the British benevolence but instead on political ideological differences on the issue of Empire.

The annexation of Fiji was motivated by British economic and geo-strategic agenda in the Fijian Islands. Annexing Fiji was critical in the economic vitality of the Australian Colonies. It was in the interests of the British Government to protect and economic interests of its Australian Colonies both politically and economically. Politically, Fiji's geo-strategic location is important in times of war both in terms of coaling naval ships and enhancing logistical issues of British naval base in New South Wales. Economically, the commercial prosperity of the Australian Colonies would also benefit the coffers of the British economy. Ricci puts succinctly as follows:

The richest and most extensive group of Western Polynesia, in which it is centrally situate, at a distance of 2000 miles north-east of Sydney, and 1,200 miles north of Auckland on New Zealand, the political importance of Fiji, viewed in connection with our Australian Colonies cannot be lightly valued or esteemed. Capable of affording shelter to the largest fleets, and offering a suitable place for coaling and taking supplies, its occupation by this country will be an essential set-off to the American and French possessions in the Pacific, which confer on those powers advantages which we hitherto have not possessed; while it will at the same time afford us a convenient center from which to control the labor traffic in the South Pacific (1875:127).

Fiji was annexed not because the British Government was concerned with the protection of human lives, let alone the protection of natives, but annexation occurred because back in Britain, the Government of the day, was one that embraced the idea of Empire, and the deep conviction that "England cannot be England without its colonies".

CHAPTER SIX: COLONIAL PROJECTS OF OPPRESSION; REMOVAL; LAND DISPOSSESSION, 'INVISIBLIZATION' AND ECONOMIC EXPLOITATION

Introduction

How is it possible for a community who owns 87% of all land and its natural resources, who have controlled executive authority for 95% of our post-independence life, who controls 90% of our army and navy, has numerical advantage in the Police and Civil Service, and is the only community receiving millions of dollars in direct financial support from the government, yet remains the most economically disadvantaged community in this country (Beddoes, 2002: 2).

Having established the economic importance of annexing Fiji in favor of the Australian Colonies, and its geo-strategic value to Great Britain, this chapter discusses the ways in which, *iTaukei* were politically oppressed, exploited and dispossessed of their land, as the result of securing such interests. British colonial activities in Fiji were not dissimilar to its colonial undertakings in Australia, New Zealand, and elsewhere, in terms of the political oppression instituted against indigenous peoples, economic exploitation and the dispossession of their native land.

The dispossession of natives from their land is always the first, result of the colonial enterprise. Edward Said, observes that the appropriation of land and space meant that colonialism was fundamentally an act of geographical violence perpetrated against indigenous people and their land rights (1993:7). Allen Pappe asserts that the expropriation of the native land has always been the prime target of the colonial intruder, while the interests and future of those indigenous to the land is marginal (208:616).

As such, the expropriation of native land, or the dispossession of the natives of their land, is first and foremost a colonial project. The dissertation has alluded to the land dispossession of indigenous peoples of the Pacific, notably the Australian Aborigines, the New Zealand Maoris, the Kanaks of New Caledonia, Native Hawaiians or the Kanaka Maoli, and the Marshallese in the context of U.S. militarization. The dissertation argues that *iTaukei* of Fiji were not an exception.

However, Fiji is a special case, not because *iTaukei* society was unaffected, or that their *iTaukei* ownership of land and indigeneity were intact despite colonization. But rather, the case of *iTaukei* is unique because, British policy of land dispossession was complex, and one that was crafted with ambiguity and contradiction, and camouflaged under the notion of the “preservation of the paramountcy of *iTaukei* interests.” At the outset, it began with the reconstruction of *iTaukei* society within the *Vanua* structure to establish socio-political homogeneity. The creation of homogeneity was imperative in order, to achieve three major objectives. Firstly, the formalization of socio-political homogeneity is critical in determining a standardized land tenure system, that can be institutionalized as the ‘traditional’ land tenure system of *iTaukei*. Secondly, once a standardized land tenure system was legalized, then the ‘traditional’ rights of access to, and use of land, on the part of the *iTaukei* can be subsequently determined, and formalized. The third object of using the *Vanua*, was to facilitate the process of land registration, which as earlier discussed included the formalization of the *mataqali* as the ‘traditional land holding unit’, the marking of land boundaries for respective *mataqalis*, and the registration of *iTaukei* into individual *mataqalis*.

The other component of British policy towards *iTaukei* land dispossession was the creation of the *ITaukei* Land Trust Board or the TLTB (then known as the Native Land Trust Board). The TLTB was tasked with two major responsibilities. Its first task was to demarcate a geographical land space for the exclusive use of *iTaukei*. This demarcated land is known as the Native Reserve. The second responsibility was to administer the leasing of land, outside of the Native Reserve, to non-*iTaukei*. During the colonial period, this was largely Fijian sugarcane farmers, of Indian ancestry, formerly known as Indo-Fijians. Indian laborers were brought into Fiji to work in sugarcane plantations. Between 1879 and 1916, a total of 60,965 Indian workers were recruited into sugar industry (Sutherland 1992:32). In the post independent era, leases were extended to private foreign investors, and multinational corporations. As will be discussed in this chapter, the TLTB is the institution that administers and controls the rights of access to, and use, of native land. It administers a dual system of land tenure, which provides for the customary rights of access to the Native Reserve, for the *iTaukei*; and the legal rights of access to the land outside of the Native Reserve to non-*iTaukei* for economic development through an institutional leasing arrangement, that included agricultural, commercial, industrial, residential tourism leases, concessive licenses, and others such as educational, Government, recreational, religious etc. (*ITaukei* Land Trust Board: <https://www.tltb.com.fj/types-of-lease/>)

The chapter will demonstrate that the reconstruction of *iTaukei* social structure, in the form of the *Vanua*, and establishment of the institutional and legislative land tenure system, or the institutional trusteeship, that control the rights of access to, and use, of *iTaukei* land, under

British colonial rule, were colonial projects and land dispossession that manifested itself through removal, political oppression, and economic exploitation.

The chapter has four major parts. The first provides an overview of the land legislations that were enacted under the British colonial rule, between 1875 and 1966, and how the notion of the 'paramountcy of *iTaukei* interest' was used to justify the establishment of the legislative and institutional land tenure framework. This included the enactment of the *Native Land Trust Act* (now known as the *iTaukei* Land Trust Act or the TLTA) in 1940, which established the TLTB. Equally important, was the enactment, in 1966 of the Agricultural and Landlord and Tenant Act (ALTA), which secured a 30-year tenancy of agricultural leases to sugarcane farmers. The second part discusses the role of the *iTaukei* chiefly establishment in the creation of the legislative and institutional framework that regulated the rights of access to, and use of, *iTaukei* land for economic development. The third part examines the *Vanua* as a space of political oppression and economic exploitation. Apart from the creation of socio-political homogeneity, and the standardization of *iTaukei* land tenure system, the creation of the *Vanua*, also formalized a new chiefly establishment, and hence the pervasive presence of chiefs within *iTaukei* society. This had led to the political subjugation of *iTaukei* to the new chiefly establishment with the newly homogenized *iTaukei* society, which over time bred a culture of silence and economic exploitation. The fourth part examines the trusteeship role of the TLTB as a project of land dispossession and economic exclusion. The role of the TLTB, had over the years stifled the development of *iTaukei* entrepreneurship by entrenching and locking them in a culture of subsistent agriculture within the Native Reserve, while facilitating the use of native

land, outside of the reserve for economic development by non-*iTaukei* commercial farmers, private foreign investors and multinational corporations.

It is important to note, that the discussion in this chapter refers to the period between the enactment of the Land Claims Commission, in 1875, and that of the Agricultural and Landlord and Tenant Act in 1966 (ALTA), and its renewal in 1977. The land reforms instituted under the current Government are not part of this discussion.

An Overview of Fiji's Land Legislation 1875-1977

The land legislations which provided the legislative and institutional framework that governed the rights of access to, and use of Native Fijian land, were enacted in the colonial era (Boydell and Shah 2003: 5-6; Sharma 1991:1). This is namely the *Land Claims Commission Act* of 1876, the *Native Land Ordinance* of 1880 (now known as the *iTaukei* Land Act or TLA), the *Native Land Trust Act* of 1940 (now known as the *iTaukei* Land Trust Act or TLTA), and the Agricultural Landlord and Tenant Ordinance of 1966, which was later modified and renamed the Agricultural Landlord and Tenant Act in 1977. Between 1904 and '07, a series of land reforms were enacted, but were later revoked, because they were, seen as potentially catastrophic in the 'preservation' of *iTaukei* society (Lal 1991: 28-31). This will be also discussed below.

The principle of the inalienability of *iTaukei* land inscribed in the Deed of Cession in 1874 provided the broader context that guided Gordon's approach in the formulations of the land legislations (Sutherland 1992:32). Queen Victoria of England was reputed to have personally commanded Gordon on two different occasions, to assure *iTaukei* that their land would not be taken away from them (Nayacakalou 1975:3; Halapua 2003:9). These assurances were made in

the light of the dispossession of Maoris from their land under the Treaty of Waitangi in 1840, which led to the Maori Land Wars, between 1845 and 1872 (Campbell 2011:209). However, by the time Gordon arrived in 1875, European planters had claimed much of the best arable land (Halapua 2003:14-15; Lal 1992:12-13). Gordon believed that the preservation of *iTaukei* was dependent on the protection of their land. Gordon supposed said that: "All those who are acquainted with the Fijian race know perfectly well that if you separate them from their land the race will die out (quoted in Donnelly et al 1994: 40). This belief, led him to undertake two important measures to protect *iTaukei* land. First, he established the Lands Claims Commission, in 1875, to authenticate the proper sales of native land (Ward 1969:3). After examining all land sales, the Commission approved the proper sales of only 517 acres of land out of the 854,000 acres that were initially claimed (Donnelly et al, 1994: 40; Ward 1969:3). Second, Gordon, in consultation with the Council of Chiefs, which he himself reinvented in 1876, enacted in 1880, the *Native Land Ordinance* in 1880. The NLO institutionalized the communal ownership of land in the hands of *iTaukei* and principle of land inalienability (France 1969:129; Boydell and Shah 2003:5). As a result of this legislation a total of 1.5 million hectares of land were held as communal property of the *iTaukei*, and inalienable (Donnelly et al, 1994: 40).

The second wave of land legislations were developed by Governor im Thurn between 1904 and 1907, Fiji's ninth colonial Governor (Lal 1992: 29-30). According to im Thurn the *Native Land Ordinance* (1880) created by Gordon deprived *iTaukei* the opportunity to participate in economic production in Fiji's agricultural economy (ibid). The communal ownership of land, im Thurn argued inhibited *iTaukei* from thinking independently and entrepreneurially (ibid). Instead, such ownership of land locked them within a subsistent economy, under the

exploitation of chiefs (ibid). im Thurn concluded that the present land tenure system hindered the socio-economic advancement of *iTaukei* within the colonial order (ibid).

As such, im Thurn spearheaded a series of land reforms which were designed would foster the participation of *iTaukei* in colonial agricultural economy. Among others, the most prominent ones included the *Native Lands Amendment Ordinance* (No. IV), enacted in 1905 (ibid). While the principle of inalienability of *iTaukei* land was still intact, Ordinance IV permitted the sale of *iTaukei* land only with the approval of the Governor in council. Also in 1905, im Thurn secured the *Native Lands Acquisition Ordinance* (No. V), which empowered the colonial government to appropriate native land for public purposes (ibid). This included the building of roads, canals, bridges etc. Further, in 1906, the *Acquisition of Land Ordinance* (No. XVI), was enacted to define what the colonial government meant by 'public purpose', which included enterprises that advanced the interests of the colonial state (ibid). While native land came under the purview of Ordinance XVI, such legislation was designed to compel European landowners in the western part of Fiji to give up their land for the construction of the tramline by the Colonial Sugar Refinery (CSR).

Finally, the last piece of land legislation secured by im Thurn was the *Native Lands Amendment Act* (Ordinance No. IX), of 1907 (ibid). Under Ordinance IV all restrictions relating to the individual ownership of land or lease of land by *iTaukei* were removed (ibid). In other, words the *Native Lands Amendment Act* (1907) allowed *iTaukei* to have private ownership of land, or to lease customary land on an individual basis (ibid). On, the whole, im Thurn's land reforms were part of his initiative not only to promote entrepreneurial and independent thinking among indigenous Fijians, but one that would also promote the interests of European

planters. Under the *Native Land Amendment Act*, white settlers could purchase land also. Hence, im Thurn's 1907 amendment led to the outright sale of 20, 184 acres of native land between 1905 and 1909 (ibid).

Brij Lal (1992) argues that in reforming the land legislations im Thurn was engaging in the wider process of questioning the old colonial orthodoxy of the previous ruling colonial elites. Lal maintains that im Thurn's land reforms were not an isolated colonial policy but rather, it was part of a larger colonial pursuit, in promoting individualism and personal enterprise of *iTaukei*. Such initiative according to Lal, was initially developed by his predecessors, O'Brien and Jackson.⁴ The three shared the view that freeing up all unused land would not only benefit *iTaukei* but it would also promote the development of the colony as a whole (Ibid).

However, the old orthodoxy status from the Gordon-Thurston years were vehemently opposed (ibid 31). The advocates of the old colonial orthodoxy included the first four colonial governors namely Gordon, Des-voeux, Mitchell, and Thurston (ibid). The reforms were, seen as an attempt to destroy the basic institutions of the indigenous Fijian society. Insulted at the dismantling of their protective framework for *iTaukei*, Gordon who was now back in London and sitting in the House of Lords as Lord Stanmore, together with his likeminded colleagues, sabotaged the progressive effects of im Thurn's land reforms (ibid 32-33). In 1911 the Colonial Office in London revoked im Thurn's land reforms and ruled that all unused land, (non-crown and non-fee simple

⁴ O'Brien was Fiji's 5th Governor while Jackson was the 7th.

land) whether occupied or not were to belong to indigenous Fijians (ibid). As such Gordon's Native Land Ordinance was restored (ibid). Furthermore, sale of *iTaukei* land was prohibited, and land lease could only be approved by the colonial state. Finally, land sales through exceptional cases, can only be approved by the Secretary of the State in London. At the end, Gordon's Native Land Ordinance of 1880 was re-institutionalized (ibid).

As earlier mentioned, between 1879 and 1917, a total of 60,965 Indian workers were recruited under an indentured system to work in the sugarcane plantations (Sutherland 1992:32). In 1880 the Colonial Sugar Refinery (CSR) was invited by the British colonial government to extend its operation in Fiji (Lal 1992:13). The CSR Company was formed in Sydney in 1855, taking over assets of the Australasian Sugar Company. It operated sugar cane plantations and mills in Queensland and northern NSW, and refineries in Sydney, Melbourne and Auckland. It began operations at Nausori on the Rewa River to the east of Suva in 1882 processing canes from its own plantation worked with Indian indentured laborers, and those bought from local planters. In 1886 the Rarawai Mill in Ba commenced work, built by CSR for its subsidiary, the New Zealand Sugar Company. Subsequently the Company opened mills in in Labasa on Vanua Levu in 1894, in Lautoka in 1903, and in 1926 it purchased the Penang sugar mill at Nadi. In 1924 CSR introduced its 'tenant farming' system in Fiji as a possible solution to labor problems due to the abolition of the Indian indenture system. CSR remained in Fiji until 1973, framing the country's economic development throughout that period.

In securing the extension of the CSR in Fiji the British colonial government sold 1000 acres of land to the company at £2 an acre, and reserved another 1000 acres in Savusavu Bay

(Lal 2000: 355). In 1909, the CSR leased some of its plantations to private contractors but this arrangement collapsed given the end of the indentured labor system in 1916 (ibid). In the 1920s, the CSR divided 132, 886 acres into 10-acre parcels, and developed a small tenant farm system. Each of these ten acres of land was subleased to Fiji-Indian tenants by the CSR (ibid). But the small tenant farm system was not enough to accommodate the demand for land by Indo-Fijian workers, who have now become full British subjects in the colony.

The expiration of the Indian indentured system in 1917 led to the increasing demand on land (Norton 1977:36-37). In the 1920's Indian tenants who have now become full British subjects in the colony, began to constitute a compelling pressure on *iTaukei* land (ibid). This necessitated the establishment of an institutional and legal arrangement, to access *iTaukei* land (Lal 1992:99). According to Lal, the existing lease procedure of 1920's was burdensome, "and frustrating in the extreme" (ibid). A *mataqali* (land owning unit) that wants a piece of their land leased would apply to their respective District Commissioner (ibid). The commissioner would then notify the local *buli* where the *mataqali* land is located (ibid). The *buli* then brings the application to the *bose ni tikina* (district council meeting) where members of the *mataqali* would express their views on the proposed lease (ibid). The *buli* then communicates the minutes of such meeting to the Commissioner, who then passes it on together with his recommendations and an estimated value of the rental value of the proposed lease, to the colonial government (ibid). The Commissioner's report would then be jointly reviewed by Commissioner of Land and the Secretary of Native Affairs (ibid). Once approved, the lease is auctioned to the highest bidder (ibid). While the leasing procedure was simplified in later part of the 1920's, most of the irrational elements still existed, such as the ability of the *mataqali* heads to manipulate potential

lessees to enrich themselves (ibid). At times the only way an Indian tenant farmer could secure a lease was through bribery (ibid 100). According to Lal, such bribery did not even guarantee lease approval since the district council or the colonial government may eventually disapprove of the lease at the end of the day (ibid, 99).

Towards the end of the 1920's both the Colonial Sugar Refinery (CSR) and the British colonial government were confronted with a looming crisis. The insecurity of tenure and the absence of legal means to systematically access *iTaukei* land, threatened the perpetual viability of the sugar industry (ibid, 100). However, the colonial government did not want, to be seen, as pressuring *iTaukei* for more land. The pressure from Indian tenant farmers for a simple and systematized leasing procedure provided the opportunity they needed. As previously discussed, the colonial government used the Indian tenant farmers, to camouflage the need to organize a legal means to systematically and legitimately access *iTaukei* land in order to entrench Fiji's sugar based economy. This led to the establishment of the TLTB.

In 1940, the *Native Land Trust Act* (NLTA) was enacted to establish a centralized authority over *iTaukei* land (Boydell and Baya 2014:5). The NLTA in turn, established the TLTB (ibid). The TLTB was tasked with two major responsibilities, which included the creation of the Native Reserve and the administration of *iTaukei* land outside of the reserve through a leasing arrangement. The establishment of the TLTB, under the NLTA in 1940 put in place an institutional establishment to administer an organized, or the rights of access to *iTaukei* land. This led to the final piece of land legislation namely the *Agricultural Landlord and Tenant Ordinance* (ALTO).

ALTO was enacted in 1966, which secured a ten-year lease to each sugarcane farmer (Lal 1986:83). ALTO provided a ten-year lease with a renewal of another ten years, provided that the landowners showed proof of hardship to justify the termination of the lease (ibid). In 1977, ALTO was amended to secure an additional twenty years of agricultural lease to Fijians of Indian ancestry. Also, ALTO was changed to ALTA, the Agricultural Landlord and Tenant Act.

The Structure of Land Ownership in Fiji and the Sugar Industry

Fiji's Land constitutes of 6% freehold, 7% state land, 87% and *iTaukei* land (*ITaukei* Land Trust Board: <https://www.tltb.com.fj/tenants-faq/>). *ITaukei* land is supposedly 'owned' communally by members of the *mataqali*. The *mataqali* is a registered entity in the Register of Native Lands (RNL) whose membership is traced through patrilineal decent (<https://www.tltb.com.fj/itaukei-land-trust-board-tltb/>). Members of the *mataqali* are recorded in the *I Vola ni Kawabula* (record of living descendants) which is kept and maintained by the *ITaukei* Lands Commission (TLC).

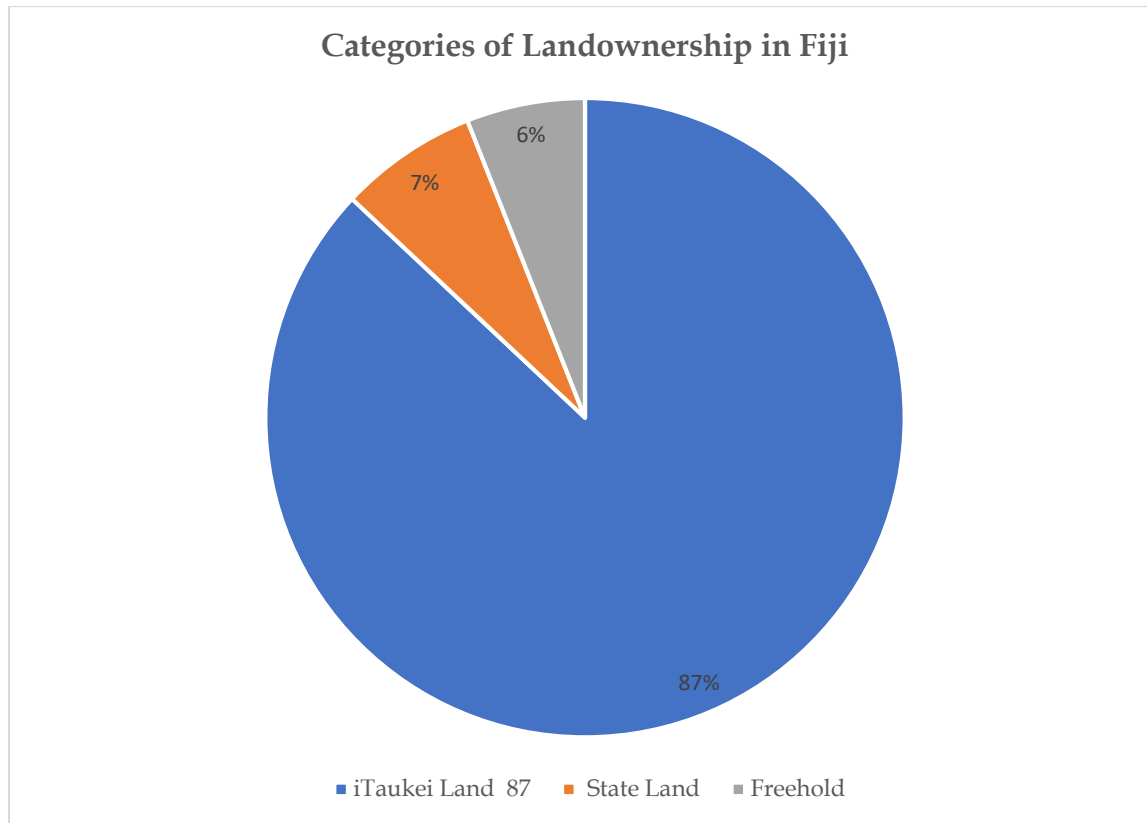
Table 1

Categories of Land Ownership in Fiji

Categories of landowners	Area (Hectares)	Percentage of Land Area
Fijian Customary Owned L	1, 493, 658	87
State Lands	145, 000	7
Freehold Lands	142, 000	6
Total	1, 780, 658	100

Sources: (NLTB: <http://www.nltb.com.fj/faqs.html>)

Fig.2



ITaukei land constitutes almost ninety percent of Fiji's land. However, only 31%, (25% of Fiji's total land) is valuable agricultural land and this has been taken up for agricultural, residential and other commercial purposes (Rakai and Elizabeth 1995:6). The best land is Freehold and State Lands and these accounted for 17% of Fiji's total land area. *ITaukei* land is divided into two major categories. This includes the Native Reserve and the non-reserve. The native reserve consists of 1,400,861 acres while 2,290,049 acres are composed of non-reserve. The former was designed for the exclusive use of the members of the *mataqali* for their subsistent livelihoods, while the later was made available for lease to non-*iTaukei* particularly under the conditions stipulated under the Agricultural Landlord and Tenant Act (ALTA). Non- reserve

land is also made available to other stakeholders for commercial and residential purposes and other sectors of the modern economy.

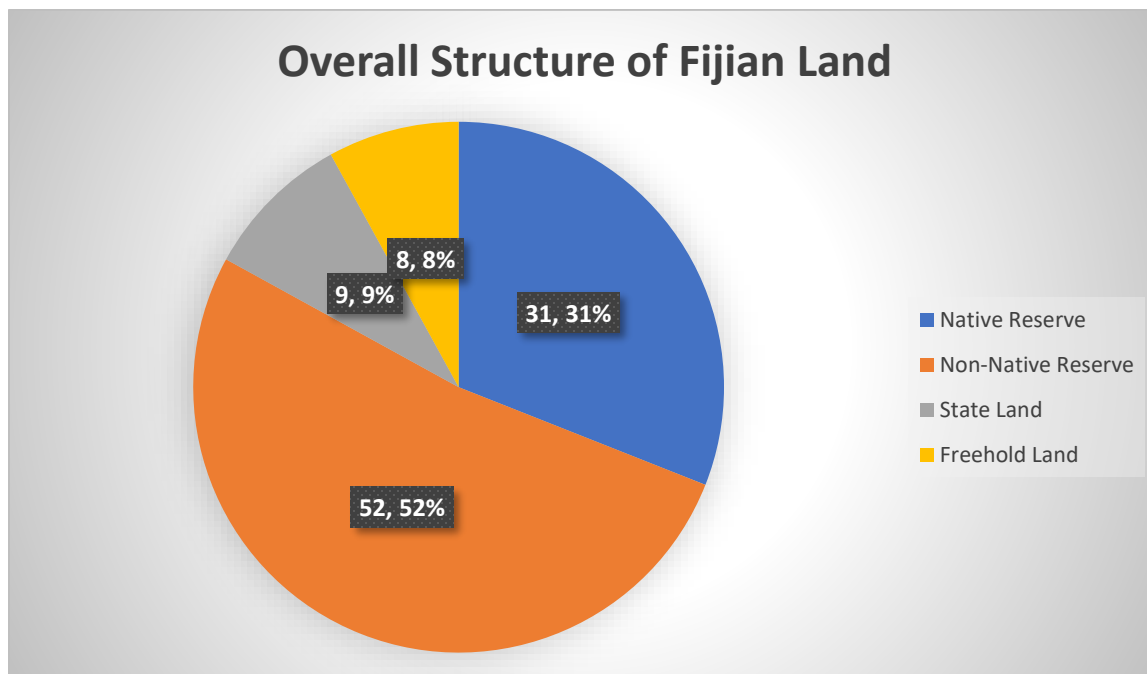
Table 2

Overall Structure of Fijian Land

	Area (Hectares)	Percentage of Native Land
Native Reserve Land	566, 908	31
Non-Reserve Land	926, 750	52
State Land	145, 000	7
Freehold Land	142, 000	6
Total	1, 780, 658	100

(Source: NLTB http://www.nltb.com.fj/land_statistics.html).

Fig 3



Source: (ibid)

The leasing arrangements of *iTaukei* land is administered by the *ITaukei* Land Trust Board (TLTB) which acts as trustee for *iTaukei* landowners. This includes *iTaukei* for agriculture and other industries that involve *iTaukei* land. In 2007, for instance the TLTB, has administered 33, 744 leases covering 246, 615 hectares, representing twenty six percent of *iTaukei* land and generating a rental proceed of \$F22, 076, 737 annually (http://www.nltb.com.fj/land_statistics.html). Almost seventy percent of *iTaukei* land is designated for agriculture. Other types of leases on *iTaukei* land included commercial, educational, forestry/pine, residential and tourism, (Ibid). As part of its trusteeship role, the TLTB is also responsible for the collection of land rental.

Table 3

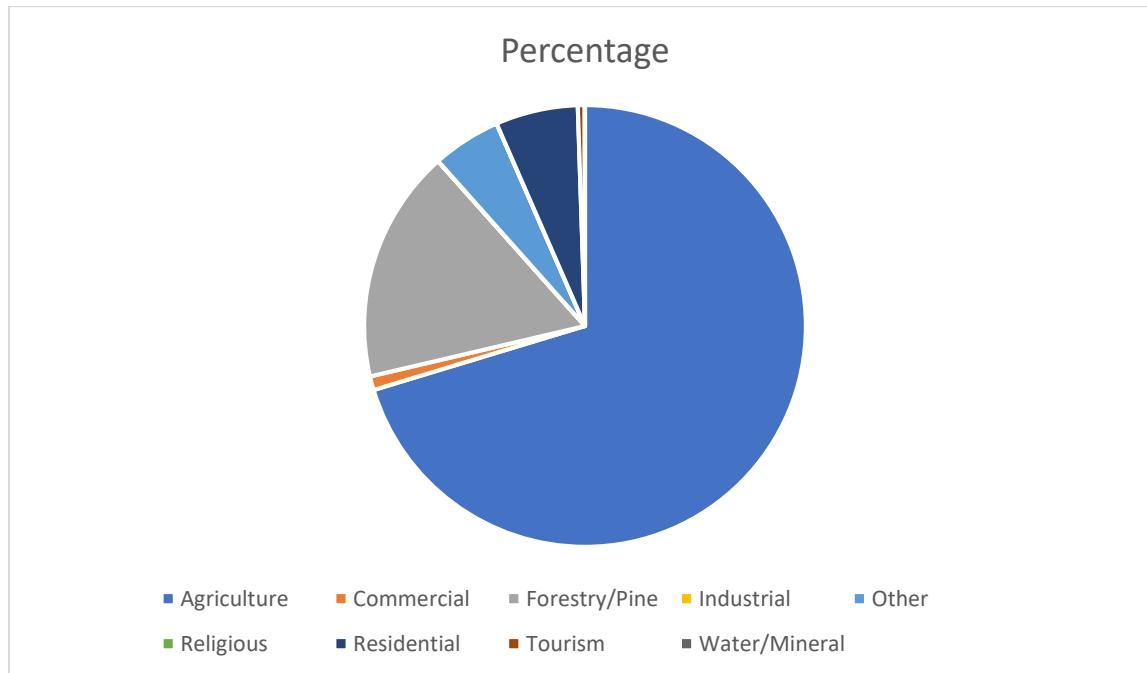
Lease Statistics by Industry 2007

Industries	Number of Leases	Rental Proceeds (F\$)	Number of Hectare
Agricultural	15, 279	9,097,927	171, 149
Commercial	1, 119	2, 002 459	2, 708
Educational	444	356,121	1, 341
Forestry/Pine	273	1, 027, 781	40, 856
Industrial	447	1, 094, 404	562
Other	1, 411	1, 952, 652	12, 856
Religious	25	7, 311	10
Residential	14, 576	4, 491, 744	15, 885
Tourism	157	2, 034, 535	1, 221
Water/Mineral	13	11, 803	27
Total	33, 744	22, 076, 737	246, 615

Source: (TLTB http://www.nltb.com.fj/land_statistics.html)

Fig. 3

Leased *iTaukei* Land by Industry 2007



The Role of Chiefs in the Making of the Land Legislations

Chiefs played a critically important role during the ninety-six years of British colonial rule, particularly in relation to the use of *iTaukei* land for economic development (Durutalo 1986: 3-7; Howard 6-7; Sutherland 47-49). The status of the *iTaukei* chiefs became powerful, initially as a result, of their cooptation in 1875 into the state machinery of colonial rule through British policy of indirect rule, and later through the institutionalization of the *Vanua*, as the new socio-political structure of *iTaukei* society, which came into being in 1939 (Norton 1990:45). As Norton observes:

It did much more than restore the position of the principal chiefs. It gave them a collective power they had never enjoyed before, a power without parallel in other colonial administrations in the Pacific (ibid).

This paved the way towards the systematic exploitation of *iTaukei* land through colonial taxation policy and the expropriation of *iTaukei* land for the sugar plantation economy. Chiefs were empowered to be agents of social control and economic exploitation As Sutherland observes that:

As agents of social control, they formed crucial links in a chain of containment which controlled the Fijian masses and allowed the smooth functioning of the colonial economy dominated by white capital (1992:27).

This role became critical in the establishment of a legal and institutional means to access *iTaukei* land, in perpetuity (Norton 1977:36). British officials did not want to be seen, as pressuring *iTaukei* to give up their land since it will tarnish their image of the protector of *iTaukei* land (ibid). Strong resistance against the leasing of *iTaukei* land to Indian tenant farmers came from *iTaukei* from places where land had already been alienated for the establishment of the sugar industry (Macnaught 1982:33). In the west, for instance chiefs were concerned about the future of their people should land be further alienated through a leasing arrangement (Lal 1992:98). In Nadroga for instance, the Tui Nadroga (chief of Nadroga) said, “We think of our descendants and we foresee what will happen to them” (ibid). Furthermore, landowners in the western districts of Nailaga and Bulu in responding to the leasing proposal by the colonial government, said: “Where would we reside? (ibid) Our wives and our children are they to live in goats’ hiding places” (ibid). In Nanuca, Cakaudrove, *iTaukei* refused to lease their almost

4000 acres of land to Indians (Macnaught 1982:34). Also, the people of Rewa and those of Hill tribes, snubbed at the idea of leasing their land to the CSR or Indians for that matter (ibid).

The British colonial government therefore, used leading *iTaukei* chiefs such as Sukuna to secure *iTaukei* acquiescence for the availability of *iTaukei* for lease (Lal 1992 44). Ratu Sukuna, an eastern paramount chief, was one of the most influential in Fiji's colonial history (ibid). Sukuna's chiefly lineage, Oxford education and experience in the Second World War made him well positioned to advance the cause of the colonial state in the twentieth Century (Lal 1992:71). Given the unquestionable loyalty and submission to chiefly authority - chiefly advice and appeal, were often embraced by *iTaukei* in general (Durutalo 1986:1). The colonial government effectively exploited chiefly influence, to secure permanent access to the use of *iTaukei* land, and other forms of economic exploitation such as *iTaukei* taxation system (Howard 1991:28; Sutherland 1992: 28-29). In placating *iTaukei*'s suspicions towards the leasing of their land, Sukuna said the following to his fellow chiefs in the Council of Chiefs meeting in 1936:

It is the bounden duty of the landowner to use what they possess for the benefit of all ... f the Government takes charge of the lands we cannot use there can only be one result: the leasing will be under better control and we will receive more rents for there will be no waste land. We will live peacefully with our neighbors who have taken up homes in this country. We are doing our part here and so are they. We wish to live and so do they...Money produces a close interrelation of interest. If other communities are poor, we too remain poor. If they prosper, we too will prosper. But if we obstruct other people from using our lands there will be no prosperity... (quoted in Norton 1990, 44).

This, however, was the exploitation of *iTaukei* unquestionable allegiance to the *iTaukei* chiefly establishment, of which Sukuna was a member. Furthermore, Ratu Deve Toganivalu and Ratu Popi Seniloli, two of Sukuna's fellow eastern chiefs subscribed to this line of reasoning as early

as 1923 (Lal, 1992:98). On June 8, 1923 Toganivalu the *Roko Tui Bua* told his fellow chiefs in the northern province of Bua:

What is the use of your land lying idle and in being in a state of poverty? It would be far better if you gave your land to be leased or sold, and thus acquire money. It is no use doing nothing with waste land of use to you (ibid).

The deployment of leading *iTaukei* chiefs such as Sukuna, Toganivalu and Seniloli, facilitated the establishment of the *ITaukei* Land Trust Board (TLTB). Eaton notes: "The NLTB was accepted by the owners mainly because of their trust in the Fijian statesman and founding father of the NLTB, Ratu Sir Lala Sukuna" (1988:21). As earlier discussed the Native Land Trust Act (NLTA) was enacted in 1940 which led to the establishment of the *ITaukei* Land Trust Board (TLTB). Undoubtedly chiefs such as Sukuna and his colleagues were puppet of the colonial state. Sukuna's appeal to the Council of Chiefs in 1936 was a manipulation of indigenous ideals and values deployed to essentially benefit the colonial state and *iTaukei* chiefly establishment.

Sukuna and his chiefly colleagues were of course direct beneficiaries of colonial policies. As agents of social control, and advocate of colonial hegemony, chiefs were a perpetually privileged minority in the colonial state. Sukuna, for instance was appointed District Commissioner in 1936, the first chairman of the TLTB in 1941, Knighted in 1946, the first Secretary of Fijian Affairs in 1943 and the first speaker of the Legislative Council in 1946 (Lal 1991:44; Macnaught 1982: 62-63). As a principal chief, Sukuna also received a substantial amount of lease money that is collected and distributed by the TLTB, an issue that will be discussed later in the chapter. The institutionalization of *iTaukei* chiefly establishment, was an

essential constituent in the reconstruction of *iTaukei* society under the *Vanua* structure, which became a space of political mobilization and oppression of *iTaukei*.

The *Vanua* as a Project of Political Oppression and Chiefly Exploitation

The establishment of the *Vanua*, created a space of political oppression and exploitation both in the colonial and post-colonial periods. At the end of the land registration period in 1939, a new chiefly establishment came into being within *iTaukei* society. This was the homogenized pyramidal structure of the *Vanua*. Given *iTaukei* socio-political heterogeneity, the institutionalization of the *Vanua*, means, that in areas that were socio-politically egalitarian, a rigid and hierarchical structure was imposed overnight. Such hierarchical structure also entailed newly created chiefly positions deployed at different hierarchical levels within the pyramidal structure. Such areas included Ba, the Hill Tribes of Naitasiri, and the interiors of Magodro, Rakiraki and the Yasawa Islands.

The pyramidal structure has three layers, and each layer comes under the power of a group of chiefs. Under the *Vanua* level, is the *turaga i taukei*, this is the most powerful chiefly position within the *Vanua*, both politically and economically. Politically because he rules over several *yavusa*, each of this *yavusa* has several *mataqali*, all of which pay homage to the *turaga i taukei*. The *turaga i taukei* receives the largest portion of the lease money (head lease) which is collected and distributed by the TLTB. The next level, is the *turaga ni yavusa* this a medium chief whose rules a *yavusa*, with several *mataqali* under the *yavusa*. While he is dominant within his *yavusa*, he pays homage to the *turaga i taukei*. He also receives the second largest portion of lease rental. The third level of authority with the *Vanua* is the *turaga ni maraqali*. This is the least

chiefly position, whose power is limited within the *mataqali*. He also receives the third highest portion of the lease money.

The establishment of the *Vanua*, created a space where power and dominance of *iTaukei* chiefly elites became pervasive then it was prior to British colonialism. The power and authority of *iTaukei* chiefly establishment within the *Vanua* was legitimized by notions of divine rule and royalism (Durutalo 1986:1; Howard 1191:53-54). *Turaga* which articulates chiefs are venerated as being divinely ordained by God, “*na turaga sa mai vua na Kalou*” (chiefs originate by God) (ibid). This warranted the unquestionable authority and power of the *turaga* or chiefs in the *Vanua* (ibid). Royalism is the veneration of British Monarch and internalizes the importance of aristocratic rule within the *Vanua* (ibid). Under this context, commoner *iTaukei* were governed with repression and considerable strain on democratic expressions. Allegiance and loyalty towards chiefly establishment created a culture of silence, which breeds ground for the accumulation of wealth by chiefly elites.

For instance, the *iTaukei* chiefly establishment, until very recently, had been the recipient of the largest proportion of the lease money. As mentioned earlier, the TLTB collects the lease money from non-*iTaukei* and distributes in accordance with section fourteen of the Native Land Trust Ordinance (Native Land Trust Act 1985). On average, the TLTB collects approximately \$F9million annually in lease money under ALTA alone (TLTB: <https://www.nltb.com.fj/>). Between 1940 and 1999 lease money was distributed as follows, 25% to the TLTB for administrative cost, 30% to *iTaukei* chiefly establishment, (5% to *turaga iTaukei*, 10% to *turaga ni yavusa* and 15% to *turaga ni mataqali*) and 45% was shared by the remaining members of the *mataqali* (Durutalo 1986:19). In 2007, for instance, out of the \$F9, 097.927 collected, the TLTB

appropriated \$F2.3million, the minority *iTaukei* chiefly establishment appropriated \$F2.73 million, and \$4million went to the remaining members of the *mataqali* which stood at approximately two hundred and fifty thousand eligible recipients (TLTB: <https://www.tltb.com.fj>; *iTaukei* Land Commission 2007). In some cases, all three titles would be held by one single chief (Kurer 2001:300). The *Vanua* therefore had become a space of prosperity for chiefs while for the mass population of *iTaukei* are oppressed, exploited and marginalized.

There have been changes in the distribution formula. In 1999, the TLTB's portion was reduced to twenty percent (ibid). The most significant change in the distribution of lease money occurred in 2010 (Boydell and Baya 2014:8). According to decree 61 of 2010 the distribution formula of lease money was amended to include the equal distribution of lease money (ibid). It remains to be seen how this will shape power relations within *iTaukei* society. At any rate, it is expected that the power and influence of *iTaukei* chiefly establishment will diminish as emerging *iTaukei* generations become increasingly educated, exposed to different ways of life, and become more progressive in thinking.

The power of *iTaukei* chiefly establishment transcended into Fiji's post-colonial development. The first *iTaukei* political party established after political independence in 1970 was the Alliance Party. The Alliance Party was led by Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara, the paramount chief of Lau. His title included, the *Tui Nayau*, *Tui Lau*, and the *Sau ni Vanua o Lau*. The Alliance Party exploited the notions of *turagism* and royalism to perpetuate its political dominance within the *Vanua* and at the national political scene. As a result, there were very little democratic expressions and public debate on issues of economic and political importance. This led to the

dominant role of the Alliance Party in the first seventeenth years, (1970-1987) of Fiji's post-colonial development.

TLTB as a project of Removal and Containment

The first problematic aspect of TLTA and TLTB is the creation of the Native Reserve. Under section 15 (1) the TLTB is responsible for the creation of the Native Reserve while section 16 (1) prohibits the leasing of such reserves (Native Land Trust Act, Chapter 134).

Native reserves

15.-(1) It shall be lawful for the Board, by notice in the Gazette, to set aside any portion of native land as a native reserve.

16.-(1) Subject to the provisionsno land in any native reserve shall be leased or otherwise disposed of (ibid).

The Native Reserve is a space and place of relocation and containment. *ITaukei* were physically removed from the best arable land, to the native reserve which constituted largely the inaccessible part of *iTaukei* land and poor soil quality. This was to make possible the securement of the best arable land for the sugar plantation economy. The creation of the native reserve policy was part of a broader colonial effort to contain *iTaukei* in subsistent agriculture. It was also based on the assumption that natives are lazy and therefore cannot be dependent upon to provide reliable source of labor in the plantation economy. As historian Calman observes:

....many Europeans regarded the Fijians as a lazy good for nothing who never did an honest day's work and whose presence prevented opening up of land (quoted in Norton 1990:37).

The creation of the Native Reserve institutionalized the containment of *iTaukei* within the Native Reserves. Given the fact, that Native Reserve cannot be leased, *iTaukei* are restricted within subsistent agriculture. The removal of *iTaukei* to Native Reserve was imperative in order, to secure the best arable land for the establishment of the sugar industry. Since *iTaukei* are 'lazy' and unaccustomed to the routine nature of commercial agriculture they were seen not only as unproductive, but also as obstacle to the progression of the colonial economy. Chiefs like Sukuna was used to enforce the containment of *iTaukei* in the Native Reserve. Sukuna therefore, strongly opposed the migration of *iTaukei* outside of the village setting either as independent farmers or engagements in any kind of wage labor in the urban centers (Lal 1992:52-53; Sutherland 1992:45-46). He adamantly rejected the philosophy of individualism (Norton 1977:46). He argued that indigenous engagement in the modern economy will lead to the neglect of customary social obligations and the Fijian cultural values that will lead to the gradual disintegration of Fijian way of life (ibid).

However, Sukuna also had a lot to gain from his advocacy of indigenous Fijian containment. To allow Fijian commoners to move out of the traditional village setting was to deprive chiefs such as himself chiefly exaction, and the privileges they enjoyed at the expense of the latter. Given the regimented life style in villages and chiefly exploitation, indigenous Fijians found it desirable and liberating to secure better lives outside their villages (bid, 66).

However, the policy of indigenous Fijian containment compelled them to be confined and exploited by *iTaukei* chiefs in their villages. It is interesting to note that while Sukuna rejected the philosophy of individualism, he on the other hand spearheaded the establishment of the TLTB which functions to advance capitalism, an economic system that thrives and reproduces itself through the notion of individualism and private property rights.

TLTB a Project of Land Dispossession and 'Invisibilization'

In order, to understand the dispossession of *iTaukei* of their land one has to understand the role of the *ITaukei* Land Trust Board (TLTB). As mentioned earlier, the TLTB came into existence as the result of the enactment of the *ITaukei* Land Trust Act (TLTA). The TLTB is stipulated as the trusteeship of *iTaukei* land. Under section 3(1) of the TLTA, an institution in the form of the *ITaukei* Land Trust Board (NLTB) was established. "3. -(1) There is hereby established a board of trustees called the Native Land Trust Board.... (The Native Land Trust Act, Chapter 134).

As a "board of trustees" the TLTB has two major roles. The first was the demarcation of a geographical land space for the exclusive use of *iTaukei*. This demarcated land is called the Native Reserve. The second was to administer the leasing of *iTaukei* land to non-*iTaukei*. During the colonial era, this basically included sugarcane farmers, who were the ancestors of Indian indentured workers, formerly known as Indo-Fijians. Under the 2014 Constitution, they are now called Fijians of Indian ancestry. In the post-colonial period, lease was extended to private investors and multinational corporations, particularly in the tourism industry, and real estate

development. Others included extractive industries (such as copper mining), logging and other forms of commercial ventures that involves the exploitation of *iTaukei* land, including the exotic water production such as Fiji Water.

However, the problematic aspect of the TLTB is found section 4 of the *ITaukei* Land Trust Act (TLTA). Under section 4 (1) of the act, the TLTB effectively appropriated the ‘control’ of all *iTaukei* land.

Control of native land vested in Board 4.-(1) The control of all native land shall be vested in the Board and all such land shall be administered by the Board for the benefit of the Fijian owners (Chapter 134, *ITaukei* Land Trust Act).

The major inference of the above stipulation is that the TLTB assumes the ‘control’ of *iTaukei* land, and therefore appropriates the legal power to determine the ways in which *iTaukei* land is accessed, and used, for economic development. This loss of control was illustrated by two major court decisions where *iTaukei* landowners challenged the role of the TLTB. The court cases were *Meli Kaliavu v NLTB* (1956) and *Namisio Dikau v TLTB* (1986), and *Timoci Bavadra v TLTB* (no date).

In the case of *Meli Kaliavu v NLTB*, the former and five other *mataqali* members, sued the TLTB for leasing portion of their native land without the *mataqali*’s consent (Boydell and Shah 2003, Sharma 2003). Their claims entailed damages and an injunction to stop the TLTB from leasing their land. In adjudication Justice Hammet ruled the following:

The plaintiffs are not the owner of the land in question. They are merely five members out of the 150 members of the *Matanivuga mataqali* who own the land ... It is however not open to this member or that member to sue and recover such damages in their own personal capacity. As regard to any claims to an injunction

... they cannot, therefore, succeed in their personal claim ...to an injunction”(Fiji Law Reports 1956:20).

In the case of *Namisio Dikau v NLTB* (1986) Dikau and 4 others, sued the TLTB for issuing a logging license to a private company to log timber from their *mataqali* land. Dikau and others asserted that the issuance of logging license to the company without the *mataqali's* consent was unlawful. The court should therefore issue an injunction against the logging company from entering, cutting, felling and carrying away trees from their *mataqali* land. In addition, Dikau and others also sought damages and costs from both the TLTB and the logging company. In his ruling, Justice Rooney ruled the following:

A *mataqali* is the principal type of community which cannot be recognized as a propriety unit. The concept of individual rights of ownership is nowhere recognized ... There is nothing in that section which gives a right to any member of a *mataqali* to challenge the action of the NLTB under the NLTA ... I am of the view that the plaintiffs in this case have no *locus standi*. I uphold the objections made and dismiss the action (Fiji Law Reports 1986: 183-184).

The court decisions have three major implications. The first and foremost, is that the TLTB's "control" over *iTaukei* land is legally unchallengeable. Apart from not being allowed to sell *iTaukei* land, the TLTB has the legal power to dispose of *iTaukei* land in any way or form that they deem fit for economic development. In this respect, *iTaukei* acquiescence to the leasing of their land to non-*iTaukei* or to foreign private investors and multinational corporation, or logging on *iTaukei* land is a non-issue. The TLTB is not required under law to obtain *iTaukei* consent. Hence, the TLTB is the legal owners of

iTaukei land. In his observation Sunil Sharma, a legal expert on Fiji's land said the following:

The landowners in Fiji are to a considerable extent like "toothless tigers" they neither controlling nor managing their own land, the power is vested in the NLTB which acts like the "big brother" who makes the decisions for the landowners (1999:2).

The question that begs asking is: how can the TLTB benefit the *iTaukei* land owners without consulting them? Also, since the legislation is silent on this, then how can the TLTB be satisfied without consulting the landowners?

Secondly, the *mataqali* as the landholding unit, has no locus standi in the court of law. *The Oxford Encyclopedic English Dictionary* defines locus standi as "a recognized or identifiable status (1991:845). In the context of this definition, *iTaukei* do not have a recognizable or identifiable status in the court of law, and therefore they do not exist. *ITaukei* customary rights of access or *iTaukei* customary 'ownership' of land is not recognized in the court of law.

Further, the definition of locus standi by the USLegal.Com highlights another important dimension of the word. "In law, locus standi means the right to bring an action, to be heard in court, or to address the Court on a matter before it" (<https://definitions.uslegal.com/1/locus-standi/>). In the light of this definition *iTaukei* should have a voice in the courts but they do not.. When it comes to the institutional and legal structures that defines the control and ownership of *iTaukei* land, *iTaukei* are unidentifiable, unrecognizable and voiceless. Hence *iTaukei* are invisible, or non-existent in the context of the institutional and legislative framework that regulates the ways in

which *iTaukei* land is controlled, owned, accessed and used for economic development. In retrospect, the establishment of the TLTB is constitutive of the institutional and legal usurpation of *iTaukei* land and the dispossession of *iTaukei* of their land.

The third major implication of the court's decisions constitutes *iTaukei*'s 'invisibilization' in the modern economy or in economic production. Given that *iTaukei*'s customary rights to *iTaukei* land are unrecognizable, unidentifiable and the fact that they are voiceless in the court of law, such customary rights of access are also not recognized in the market economy. *ITaukei* are therefore not seen in Fiji's agricultural economy. Confining *iTaukei* to customary rights of access, as opposed to legal rights of access, deprives them from exercising any form of property rights, or legal entitlement to *iTaukei* land, at least, through lease. Legal rights of access to *iTaukei* land would allow *iTaukei* to possess legal entitlement to *iTaukei* land to secure financial developmental loans from commercial and development banks for real estate development and participation in commercial agriculture. Loans for commercial agriculture, or real estate development on *iTaukei* land require land title as security or collateral.

On June 6th, 2011, the *Fiji Sun* published an article online titled: "Farmers Should Get Lease Titles" (<http://fijisun.com.fj/2011/06/06/farmers-should-get-lease-titles/>). According to the article, *iTaukei* have not benefitted from government development grants because they do not possess lease title to *iTaukei* land (ibid). Between 2008 and 2011, the Fiji Government embarked on a program of providing agricultural assistance to farmers to boost agricultural production. In the Northern Division of the Fiji Islands, the project was administered by a government appointed body, the Northern Development

Program (NDP). According to the program manager, Waisele Tuidama, *iTaukei* have failed to benefit from agricultural grants since they do not have legal entitlement to *iTaukei* land (ibid). The Fiji Sun article continues as follows:

As a result, commercial banks do not receive their agricultural loan applications and NDP cannot process their application on a stand-alone grant. Mr Tuidama said the major concern was that a lot of application for grants by i-Taukei was rejected because they had not obtained any lease over their land. "A lot of our Indo-Fijian farmers are making use of NDP grants and very less i-Taukei. That is a concern to me because Indo-Fijians have leases while i-Taukei, even though they own the land, they don't have a lease title. "If you want to go to the bank for agricultural loans, they will demand the lease title and that that is why those farmers mostly i-Taukei with no lease fall back in terms of development," Mr Tuidama said. That is a concern to me because Indo-Fijians have leases while *iTaukei*, even though they own the land, they don't have a lease title. "If you want to go to the bank for agricultural loans, they will demand the lease title and that that is why those farmers mostly i-Taukei with no lease fall back in terms of development," Mr Tuidama said (ibid).

The vast, majority of *iTaukei* live on sub-standard homes on Native Reserves. Homes built on the Native Reserve are not considered as assets because there is no legal entitlement to *iTaukei* land on native reserve. The institutional constraints placed on *iTaukei* to possess private property rights through lease, and their inability to access developmental assistance from financial institutions means that *iTaukei* do not exist in the market economy, let alone benefit from it.

The above article highlights the contradiction of the trusteeship role of the TLTB and customary rights of access accorded to *iTaukei*. The role of the TLTB was designed to facilitate the legal rights of access to *iTaukei* land for economic development. This includes non-*iTaukei* commercial farmers, private investors and multinational corporations. The

containment of *iTaukei* in the Native Reserve was part and parcel of the economic strategy of the British colonial government.

The confining of *iTaukei* within the Native Reserve was an essential part of the envisioning of economic development for Fiji by the British colonial government, one that would perpetually exclude *iTaukei* from Fiji's progressive economic space.

The institutional role and legal power of the TLTB has therefore led to the 'invisibilization' of *iTaukei* landowners in Fiji's modern economy. This is particularly contradictory in the context of Fiji's agricultural economy, where the indigenous owners of the means of production, the *iTaukei* land, are invisible in agricultural production. Hence, it would not be far-fetched to argue, that the enactment of the TLTA and the subsequent establishment of the TLTB constituted colonial projects of *iTaukei* land dispossession and 'invisibilization' in economic agricultural production.

TLTB as a Project of Economic Exclusion and Exploitation

The enactment of the Agricultural and Landlord and Tenant Ordinance (ALTO) in 1966, by the British colonial government constituted the final component of the land legislation in the establishment of the institutional and legislative structure that governs the control and exploitation of *iTaukei* land. The enactment of ALTO empowered the TLTB to administer an organized and legal access to *iTaukei* land initially for a period of ten years. This was amended in 1976 to include an additional twenty years, and a change of name in the legislation from ALTO to Agricultural Landlord and Tenant Act, or ALTA. In retrospect, ALTA covers all agricultural leases for a thirty-year period to Fijian sugarcane farmers of Indian ancestry. As

mentioned earlier such sugarcane farmers were predominantly Fijians of Indian Ancestry. The ethnic composition of sugarcane farmers in 1998 was as follows:

Ethnic Breakdown of Sugarcane Growers in Fiji, 1998

	Number of Sugarcane Growers	Percentage
Fijians of Indian Ancestry	16, 710	78.1
<i>ITaukei</i>	4, 579	21.4
Others	107	0.5
Total	21, 396	100

Source: (Lal et al, 2001:9).

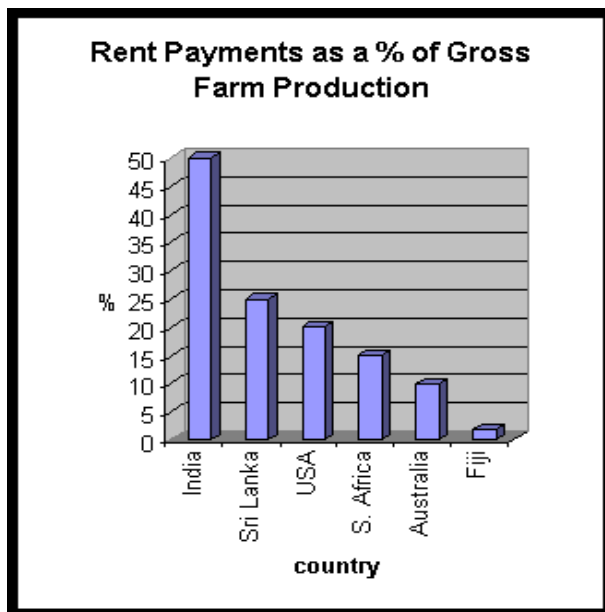
ALTA disadvantaged *iTaukei* in fundamental ways. As discussed earlier, *iTaukei* were, and still are, confined within the Native Reserve and restricted to subsistent agriculture and deprived of lease title that would have would have facilitated their participation in agricultural production. On the other hand, ALTA enabled Fiji sugarcane farmers of Indian ancestry to access *iTaukei* land, through lease or the legal rights of access, for a total period of thirty years. As such, they were able to use the lease title to access developmental loans from commercial and developmental banks which facilitated their engagement in agricultural production. Non-*iTaukeis* have therefore enjoyed the capital value of *iTaukei* land. While sugarcane farming required hard work and lots of sacrifices, non-*Taukei* sugarcane farmers have also benefitted tremendously from the sugar industry.

In order to understand the extent of *iTaukei*'s economic deprivation in Fiji's agricultural economy it is important to examine three major important issues. First, is the formula used to determine the cost of land rent prescribed under ALTA; second, the inability of the TLTB to

effectively collect rental payment; and third, the economic opportunity that non-*iTaukei* sugarcane farmers enjoyed under the preferential trading agreement between the European Union and African Caribbean and Pacific countries (EU-ACP), which was articulated under the LOME Convention and its successor, the Cotonou Agreement.

Firstly, is that the rate of the agricultural lease levied under the ALTA is amongst the lowest in the world (Davies and Gallimore 2000:16-17). Figure 1 demonstrates this fact.

Figure 4



(Source: Davies and Gallimore 2000:9)

Under the land rental provisions of the ALTA, land lease is calculated on 6% of the Unimproved Capital Value (UCV) (ibid 6). There is a protective provision embedded under ALTA that

protects tenants from paying the maximum value in rental payment (ibid). In fact, under Section 28 of ALTA, tenants can contest the application of the maximum rate to a tribunal which can authorize the reduction of lease payment (ibid).

While the annual lease is calculated on the basis of 6% of the UCV, this value is simply the maximum possible value that can be applied in principle (ibid). Hence, the vast majority of land rent is paid far below this maximum. Hence ALTA ensures that non-*Taukei* agricultural tenants pay the minimum payable rate under ALTA.

Besides the ridiculously low lease, the TLTB has been ineffective in the expeditious collection of rent under ALTA. In 1995, for instance, of the \$7.3 million contractually payable under the ALTA leases only \$4.4 million was collected (ibid:6). Given the exploitative provisions of the ALTA and the institutional inability of the TLTB to enforce the expeditious payment of the lease, the leasing arrangement under ALTA has systematically deprived *iTaukei* of over \$F1billion, of the real market value of their land.

.....the income transfer has served effectively to rob the rural Fijian community of the resources needed to cushion the hugely difficult task of transforming its subsistence based economy into a more productive and self-sustaining market based economy able to meet the growing aspirations of its growing population (ibid:11).

Thirdly, while non-*iTaukei* paid the cheapest land lease in the world, they however, received the optimum price from the sales of sugar to the European Union under the preferential trading agreement articulated under the terms of the LOME Convention and its successor, the COTONOU Agreement (ibid 10). In 1975, nine countries of the European Economic Community (ECC) ratified the LOME Convention with forty-six ACP

Countries (Laaksonen et al, 2005: 1). LOME covered the period between 1975 and 2000. Between 2000 and 2010, LOME was succeeded by the COTONOU Agreement (ibid). Like other sugar producing countries of the ACP, Fiji's sugar was sold under the stipulations of the Sugar Protocol (ibid). Under the Sugar Protocol Fiji's sugar benefitted from two important provisions. Firstly, was securement of a quota for Fiji's sugar in European market (Lal, et al 2001:1-2). This is crucial, since Fiji cannot compete on a level playing field with major sugar producing countries such as Brazil, China, or India. With the securement of quota, the sale of Fiji's sugar is guaranteed under EU-ACP preferential trading agreement. The second, Fiji's sugar is sold at a protected market price, which means that Fiji's sugar is sold at a price that is above the selling market price in the European market (ibid). According to Laaksonen (et al) ACP sugar was sold two or three times above the existing market price (2005: 1).

The non-*iTaukei* tenant community in the Sugar Industry have prospered under the role of the TLTB, the enactment of ALTA in 1966, and the preferential trading agreement under the EU-ACP preferential trading agreement. They have effectively appropriate the capital value of *iTaukei* land. Under the role of the TLTB and leasing arrangement under ALTA they were able utilize their lease title to secure loans from developmental and commercial banks and also benefit from commercial agricultural schemes occasionally administered by the Fiji Government. Such access facilitated their active engagement in the Sugar Industry. They were able to purchase farm tractors, cane trucks, automobiles as well loans for other purposes such as education and traveling. It

is important to note that some of the highly educated Indo Fijians are children of sugarcane farmers whose educational expenses were made possible through bank loans using agricultural title issued under ALTA as collateral. The lease title on native land has enabled Fiji Indian tenants to secure housing loans for the construction of better homes on their leased land or elsewhere.

The sugar industry also became a space for political mobilization and a space that they have used to articulate their economic and political aspirations. The Cane Growers Council for instance has become a politically powerful voice in Fiji's politics. The Indo Fijian political parties such the National Federation Party and the Fiji Labor Party were initiated largely by Indo Fijian tenant farmers. The Fiji Labor Party twice won the general elections in 1987 and 2000, both of which were ousted through military coups.

What About of *iTaukeis*?

What about of *iTaukei* land owners? Not only was, and is *iTaukei* land leased cheaply but the institutional role of the TLTB constrained them being active participants in economic production. Further, economic benefits from the sales of Fiji's sugar under the EU-ACP preferential trading agreement did not trickle down to the Native Reserve, where the vast-majority of *iTaukei* landowners settled on unleased land, on non-asset homes, and locked into subsistent agriculture. This explains, to an important extent, the rural poverty amongst the *iTaukei* and their subsequent influx into the urban centers. Recent surveys reveal that Fijian villagers are among the most disenfranchised lot in the country (Strategic Development Plan 2007-2011, p.6). It is important to note that *iTaukei*

villages are part and parcel of the Native Reserve. According to the government's Strategic Development Plan for 2007-2011, *iTaukei* constituted forty percent of the rural population living below poverty line (ibid). A significant proportion of *iTaukei* in villages are struggling to have their basic needs met (Strategic Development Plan 2007-2011, p.6).

A recent household income survey conducted by Chand through the sponsorship of Global Policy Network reveals that an average Fijian family in rural villages needs a minimum of \$115 per week to have the basic needs met, of which 80% is just on food. (Chand, 2005:16). However according to Chand on average, an *iTaukei* lives on just \$2 to \$4 a day with a short fall of \$83 (\$US45) (ibid). Further, a discussion paper on Poverty Status jointly prepared by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the Ministry of Finance and National Planning, reveals that about forty one percent of *iTaukei* villagers still use pit toilets, while almost 80% still have no electricity (ADB and Ministry of Finance and National Planning, 13 July 2005).

The hardship in rural Fijian villages has led to an unprecedented rural to urban migration by *iTaukei* themselves, contributing to the unprecedented expansion of slums and squatter settlements at the outskirts of major cities (Strategic Development Plan 2007-2011, 6). The 2005 report for the Ministry of Local Government, Housing and Squatter Settlement and Environment indicates that squatter population increased by 78% between 1999 and 2003 with an unprecedented increase in the number of *iTaukei* squatters. The report further indicates that sixty one percent of the squatting populations living within the vicinity of Suva (Fiji's major capital) are *iTaukei* (Lingam 2005, Mohanty 2006). Furthermore, a survey of squatter settlements in same area revealed that *iTaukei*

constituted forty percent of those living on a per capita income of less than \$2 per day, compared to 31% among Indo Fijians. In addition, approximately forty seven percent of *iTaukei* squatting in Suva do not have assets compared to 35% to that of Fiji-Indians (Mohanty 2006: 66). In other words, even within the squatting community, *iTaukei* squatters are socio economically worse off than Indo Fijian squatters.

Development practitioners argue that squatting is a symptom of poverty. According to the World Bank slums and squatter settlements are direct implications of inadequate or failed policies and bad governance (ibid). In the case of Fiji, the economic marginalization of *iTaukei* is attributed to the failed policies and legislations that established control and the rights of access to, and the use of *iTaukei* land. The irony of *iTaukei*'s predicament is that the TLTB, the institution that claims institutional trusteeship to *iTaukei* land, has instead facilitated their economic marginalization.

Conclusion

The contradictions of preserving *iTaukei* society through the institutionalization of the Vanua and the institutional trusteeship role of the TLTB are reflections of the paradox of British policies articulated under the notion of humanitarian approach in the Islands of the Pacific and claims of British benevolence. The process of colonization was not benevolent. The colonialists' project in Fiji and elsewhere constituted a project of dispossession, displacement and disempowerment. Aime Cesaire puts it succinctly as follows:

What am I driving at? At this idea: that no one colonizes innocently, that no one colonizes with impunity either; that a nation which colonizes, that a civilization which justifies colonization and therefore force – is already a

sick civilization, a civilization which is morally diseased.....(Cesaire 1975:39).

CONCLUSION

The fundamental question in this dissertation is: Why is it that the vast-majority of *iTaukei* landowners are perpetually economically marginalized, in Fiji's post-colonial space, despite owning almost ninety percent of the land in Fiji? Drawing from a variety of primary, secondary and archival sources this study has demonstrated that the economic marginalization is caused largely by the ways in which *iTaukeis* are dispossessed from their *iTaukei* land. This dispossession consists of the dispossession from the control of *iTaukei* land, the dispossession from the productive use of their land, and finally, the dispossession from the best and prime land, through contractual leasing arrangements. In this dissertation, the author contends that the socio-political structure of *iTaukei* society articulated under the *Vanua*, and the institutional arrangement that regulates the rights of access to *iTaukei* land under the trusteeship role of the *ITaukei* Land Trust Board (TLTB) have created land dispossession which have subsequently led political disempowerment, and economic marginalization. In other words, the institutions that define *iTaukei* indigeneity, that is the socio-political structure enunciated under the *Vanua*, and the institutional trusteeship of the TLTB which secures *iTaukei* rights to *iTaukei* land, in terms of cultural rights of access are the very institutions that create and reproduce land dispossession and economic marginalization of the vast-majority of *iTaukei* in the post-colonial space. The land tenure system that embraces the principles of land inalienability and communal 'ownership' which protects *iTaukei* land from land alienation, in the form of fee simple, or privatization is a colonial construct.

While the land tenure system embraces *iTaukei* rights to land, it also renders the prime and best arable to non-*iTaukei* and corporations for economic development

As discussed earlier, the formalization of the *Vanua* and the establishment of the TLTB under British rule, were designed as colonial projects of removal, economic exclusion, political oppression, ‘invisibilization’ and land dispossession. These colonial projects, or colonially constructed institutions are embraced and perpetuated by the Fijian post-colonial governments in order, to secure the economic development of the Fijian state at the expense of the vast-majority of *iTaukei* landowners.

The case of the Fiji has raised important questions on the following: (i) the nature of British colonialism in the South Pacific; (ii) the dynamics and complexity of land dispossession and economic marginalization in the case of *iTaukeis*; the importance of land registration as a tool of the colonial enterprise; and (iv) and the ways in which Fiji informs post-colonial theory, or critical colonial discourses. These questions are discussed below. Firstly, what does the case of Fiji inform us about the notion of British benevolence? This dissertation has shown that the notion of British benevolence in the South Pacific in general, and Fiji in particular, is a myth. The process of British colonial expansion in this region was driven by economic, political and geo-strategic motives as shown in the seizure of Australia in 1788, the annexation of New Zealand in 1840 and the ratification of the Deed of Cession in Fiji in 1840. In Fiji and New Zealand, the notion of British benevolence was used to legitimize the extension of British rule in the Islands of the Pacific, while at the same time disguise the vested economic interests of the Australian colonies. British colonialism in Fiji, has shown that the institutions that were established

to define *iTaukei* indigeneity were in fact, part and parcel of the colonial projects of land dispossession, political oppression and economic exclusion. The establishment of these institutions were disguised under the notions of institutional trusteeship and protection of the paramountcy of *iTaukei* interests.

In retrospect, contrary to claims of British humanitarian effort and colonial benevolence the annexation of Fiji was not dissimilar from British colonial objectives in the seizure of Australia in 1788 and the annexation of New Zealand in 1840. As such, the annexation of Fiji on October 10th, 1874 was a means of securing the economic and geo-strategic interests of Great Britain in the Islands of the Pacific, but one that was justified under the notion of colonial benevolence.

Secondly, how does the dynamics and complexity of *iTaukei* land dispossession informs discourses on land alienation in Oceania, and elsewhere? The dispossession of indigenous peoples of their land occurred in the form of land seizure, land theft, land purchase, land confiscation, and land concession. Further, land expropriation often occurred under conditions of violence and bloodshed, perpetrated against indigenous peoples, through military conquest. In the South Pacific, this included the extermination of Australian aborigines, the slaughtering of the Kanaks in New Caledonia, and the massacres committed against the Maoris in the course of the New Zealand. In the case of Hawaii, despite the absence of bloodshed, the Kingdom of Hawaii was seized through military conquest while the land of the Kanaka Maoli was ultimately alienated as the result of the Mahele which was instituted under King Kamehameha III.

In Fiji, however, the dispossession of *iTaukei* of their land is peculiarly different in three major respects. First, the process of land dispossession did not involve the kinds of violence experienced in other parts of the South Pacific, such as the extermination of Australian Aboriginals, or the bloodshed perpetrated against the Kanaks in the case of New Caledonia, or through the Maori Land Wars in New Zealand. In Fiji, *iTaukei*'s resistance against the process of land registration, and the establishment of land dispossessing institution such as TLTB, which were stipulated under colonial land legislations such as the TLA and TLTA, was placated by leading *iTaukei* chiefs such as Sukuna, and notion of British benevolence. Second, contrary to experiences in Australia, Hawaii, New Caledonia and New Zealand, and elsewhere, the case of land dispossession in Fiji occurs despite the 'protection' of *iTaukei* customary rights to land. Further, *iTaukei* land dispossession also occurs in spite of the institutional trusteeship of the TLTB that embraces the principles of communal land ownership and land inalienability. Be that as it may, the protection of customary rights to *iTaukei* land under the institutional trusteeship of TLTB, and the principles of communal ownership of land and land inalienability, the *iTaukei* landowners continue to experience dispossession from *iTaukei* land. This occurs through the loss of control in the administration of *iTaukei* land; the dispossession from the productive use of their land; and the dispossession from the prime and best land, through perpetual leasing arrangement. Third, the institutions that define *iTaukei* indigeneity visavi the Vanua and TLTB are essentially colonial projects of land dispossession.

The notion of institutional trusteeship and the provisions of inalienability and communal ownership of land in Fiji's land tenure system are seemingly noble and strategic in the context of the neo-liberal economic environment which emphasizes amongst other things,

private ownership of property. This simply means that the protection and ownership of *iTaukei* is entrenched in the hands of the *iTaukeis*. From the perspectives of the Australian Aboriginals, the Kanaka Maoli of Hawaii, the Maoris of New Zealand, or the Kanaks of New Caledonia, perhaps, the *iTaukeis* of Fiji represent an extraordinary case of the perpetuity of indigeneity, despite colonization. However, as argued throughout this dissertation, the *iTaukei* are just as economically marginalized as any other indigenous peoples elsewhere. The peculiarity in the case of Fiji, is that the nature of land dispossession is subtle and mischievous. Hence, the exceptionality of the *iTaukei* in the colonial experience is misleading.

The case of land dispossession of the *iTaukeis* in Fiji speaks of the complexity and the multifaceted nature of land dispossession as a colonial project. It shows that land usurpation can be deployed through non-violent means and under the pretext of colonially constructed institutions rationalized under notions of protection and preservation of the interests of native peoples. It speaks of the ability of the colonizer to craft a system of land expropriation without being seen, or perceived as alienating it from its indigenous owners. It speaks of the uncompromising nature of colonialism. The case of Fiji illustrates that there is nothing benevolent about colonization. Colonization dispossesses, displaces, denigrates, excludes and marginalizes indigenous peoples.

The third important question that the dissertation raises is the importance of land registration as a tool of the colonial enterprise. Land registration is a process of making indigenous land available for exploitation in the market, or neo-liberal economy. Land registration basically entails the recording and registration of land. As earlier discussed, land registration in Fiji included the following: (i) registration of traditional land boundaries; (ii) the

registration of the *matqaqali* as the landowning unit; and (iii) the registration of members of the *mataqali*. But there is more to registration than just identifying land boundaries and owners. Land registration is essentially the process of codifying ownership in order to convert customary tenure to freehold titles. In Fiji such conversion occurs in the form of contractual leasing arrangement. While *iTaukei* land is held by *iTaukei* under customary, or communal ownership, which cannot be alienated as freehold, on the other hand, *iTaukei* land is made available to non-*iTaukei* and corporations for economic development through leaseholds. This land included the best and prime land, while *iTaukei* are locked in the Native Reserve, which is often the marginal and the inaccessible part of the *iTaukei* land. In Hawaii land registration through the Mahele System which began in 1848 eventually led to the loss of Native Hawaiian land. Fiji's experience of land registration is unique because while the *iTaukei* land is inalienable and communally held, the best and prime land is leased out perpetually through leasing arrangements. In both cases, the process of land registration rendered indigenous land exploitable in the market economy.

The fourth question that this dissertation raises is: how does the plight of *iTaukei* contribute to critical colonial discourses? Perhaps it is important to engage Patrick Wolfe once again and to locate Fiji not only within the settler colonial discourse, but within critical colonial discourses. Wolfe's notion of the "logic of elimination" can be applied perfectly into Fiji's context (2006:387). Wolfe draws parallel between the contestation of land and the notion of genocide in settler colonial sites (ibid). "Land is life -or at least land is necessary for life. Thus contests for land can be indeed, often are -contests for life" (ibid). However, he does not contend that that settler-colonial logic of elimination is simply a form of genocide, nor is it always

genocidal (ibid). "Settler colonialism is inherently eliminatory but not invariably genocidal" (ibid). But he argues that genocide is one of the forms of settler colonial logic as witnessed in the case of the Aboriginals of Australia, the Native American Indians in North America or the Palestinians in the case of Zionist Movement. Apart from conventional form of killing Wolfe identifies two other forms of elimination – (among others)- namely repressive authenticity, and the elimination of natives through reservation and exclusion (ibid 402). Repressive authenticity occurred through the assimilation of natives into the dominant settler colonial culture (ibid). This is intended to diminish the sense of authentic indigenous identity and therefore reduce their official recognition within the settler colonial state. As Wolfe puts "it eliminates large numbers of empirical natives from official reckonings..." (ibid). This form of elimination can be seen in the cases of Native American Indians in North America and the Kanala Maoli in Hawaii. While the conventional forms of killings and repressive authenticity did not apply to the indigenous peoples of Fiji, Wolfe's articulation of elimination through removals and displacement resembles the case of *iTaukei* (ibid 391& 399). This form of elimination involves the removal and displacement of indigenous peoples into native reserves in order to secure the best of the indigenous land for the plantation economies. The most notorious was the case of the Cherokee's catastrophic "Trail of Tears" which entailed a series of forced removals of Cherokee Indians from their ancestral homelands in the Southeastern United States to the west of the Mississippi River as the result of American Indian Removal Act of 1830 (ibid 391). Wolfe's notion of the logic of elimination is premised on the idea of "securing -obtaining and maintaining -of territory" which necessitates "the elimination of the owners of that territory"

(ibid 402). He further argues that the “Primary motive for elimination is not race” but access to territory.

In the case of *iTaukei* the establishment of the institutional and legislative land tenure framework by the British colonial government should be understood within the context of Wolfe’s discussion on the logic of elimination. As such, the creation of Native Reserves was deliberate means of removing and displacing *iTaukei* from the best of *iTaukei* land in favor of “securing -the obtaining and maintaining -of territory” for economic development.

In the context of Wolfe’s “logic of elimination” the institutional and legislative framework that controls the rights of access to *iTaukei* land was a means of eliminating of those indigenous to the land. In retrospect, *iTaukei* did not “accommodate though unscathed the transformative socioeconomic system that the invaders introduced” but rather they were subjugated to it, they had no say in it, and in fact, they were restructured, displaced, removed as a result of it. Further *iTaukei* were not politically disempowered and economically marginalized as the “result of the transformative socio-economic system that the invaders introduced” - but they became scathed, twisted and fractured in the post-colonial space.

With regard to critical colonial discourses, the case of the iTaukeis of Fiji raises the following questions: (i) How do the colonizer dispossess native land for economic development, without being seen, as “taking it away” from native landowners, and therefore avoid armed confrontation and bloodshed as seen in places like Australia, New Zealand, New Caledonia and North America?; (ii) How do colonizers employ and deploy ‘colonial structures of indigeneity’ that camouflages the colonial agenda?; (iii) How can

the colonizer create a colonial space of coexistence, between indigenous peoples and settlers without compromising the colonial agenda?

The dissertation calls for political and institutional reforms. Fiji needs the political will to reform institutions such as the TLTB to foster and facilitate the incorporation of *iTaukei* into economic production. As an agriculturally based economy *iTaukei* needs to be centered in economic production. The TLTB should shift its focus from making *iTaukei* land available to non-*iTaukei*, corporations for large scale development, to *iTaukei* for sustainable commercial agriculture. This is crucial in the economic empowerment of *iTaukei* landowners. It needs to facilitate the issuance of legal rights of access to *iTaukei* to legally access their land for economic development. Further, the TLTB needs institutional collaborations with national lending agencies in the provisions of agricultural and housing loans to *iTaukei* landowners, which is key in the socio-economic development of a community. Finally, the TLTB should be instrumental in providing capacity building, and other forms of village, and community based education to foster the adaptation of *iTaukei* landowners in the productive use of their *iTaukei* land. The future of Fiji's political stability and its economic prosperity hinges in the incorporation of *iTaukei* landowners in economic production, and their meaningful participation in Fiji's agricultural economy.

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